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**OT, VOLUME 2**  
**JOSHUA - ESTHER**

*by Adam Clarke*

**Books For The Ages**

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*The*

# HOLY BIBLE

CONTAINING THE

## OLD TESTAMENT

THE TEXT

CAREFULLY PRINTED FROM THE MOST CORRECT COPIES OF THE PRESENT

***AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION,***

WITH

**A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES;**

***DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER  
UNDERSTANDING OF THE SACRED WRITINGS***

BY ADAM CLARKE,

LL.D., F.S.A., etc

FOR WHATSOEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN AFORETIME FOR OUR  
LEARNIONG; THAT WE, THROUGH PATIENCE AND COMFORT OF THE  
SCRIPTURES, MIGHT HAVE HOPE. — ROMANS 15:4

***VOLUME 2 — JOSHUA Through ESTHER.***

SAGE Software

Albany, Oregon

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

Preparing Clarke's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments for an electronic format has been a task of considerable dimensions. The Digital Library edition is the labor of love of Sulu Kelley of Concord, NC, USA. "Mr. Sulu" converted the original text from the six volume edition (originally published in 8 volumes) authored by Adam Clarke between 1810 and 1826. We thank Mr. Kelley for giving us permission to include this the first electronic edition of a most helpful and inspiring work.

The reader is advised to note the following characteristics of this version:

1. There are no Hebrew vowel pointings nor are there any Greek accents. These were not a part of the published editions of Clarke's Commentary.
2. Most capitalizations and many breathing marks were omitted from the Greek text.
3. Adam Clarke had an exceptional knowledge of Biblical languages and the languages of the earliest (known) Biblical texts. The author provides numerous references to versions in various languages which contain nuances and/or insight into the meaning of a given text. These references frequently contained phrases printed in Arabic and Anglo-Saxon among others. We anticipated few of the Library readers would have an appreciation for these references, particularly since the script and dialects of many of them were outside the scope of almost anyone's experience or education. Since these references are usually transliterated and/or explained by Mr. Clarke, we have omitted these scripts. We have observed the following abbreviation conventions when the associated language/script has been removed from the text: [AS] Anglo-Saxon; [A] Arabic, Arabian; [P], Persic, Persian; [S] Syriac, Syrian; [H] Hindu.
4. The printed version contains material not included in this electronic version: The King James text, from which the author worked, and associated cross references are omitted as each phrase discussed is quoted in the analysis itself. Several tables with obscure material are omitted as it was felt that archaic data on, for example, the motion of

the planets, information long since revised and corrected, would not enhance and may even obscure the timeless portions of the commentary.

5. The printed version contains a number of archaic forms of punctuation and capitalization. These were retained if they did not seem to obscure the meaning of the text.

# PREFACE TO THE BOOK

OF

## JOSHUA

JOSHUA, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, was first called Oshea or Hoshea, הוֹשֵׁעַ, Numbers 13:16, which signifies saved, a savior, or salvation; but afterwards Moses, guided no doubt by a prophetic spirit, changed his name into הוֹשֵׁעַ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Yehoshua or Joshua, which signifies he shall save, or the salvation of Jehovah; referring, no doubt, to his being God's instrument in saving the people from the hands of their enemies, and leading them from victory to victory over the different Canaanitish nations, till he put them in possession of the promised land. On the change and meaning of the name, see the note on Numbers 13:16. By the Septuagint he is called Ἰησοῦς ναυη, Jesus Naue, or Jesus son of Nave: and in the New Testament he is expressly called Ἰησοῦς, JESUS; see Acts 7:45; Hebrews 4:8. Joshua was denominated the servant of Moses, as he seems to have acted sometimes as his secretary, sometimes as his aid-du-camp, and sometimes as the general of the army. He was early appointed to be the successor of Moses, see Exodus 17:14; and under the instruction of this great master he was fully qualified for the important office. He was a great and pious man, and God honored him in a most extraordinary manner, as the sequel of the history amply proves. From the preceding books it appears that he became attached to Moses shortly after the exodus from Egypt; that he was held by him in the highest esteem; had the command of the army confided to him in the war with the Amalekites; and accompanied his master to the Mount, when he went up to receive the Law from God. These were the highest honors he could possibly receive during the life-time of Moses. Commentators and critics are divided in opinion whether the book that goes under his name was actually compiled by him. It is argued by those who deny Joshua to be the author, that there are both names and transactions in it which did not exist till considerably after Joshua's time. The account we have, Joshua 4:9, of the twelve stones

set up by Joshua in the midst of Jordan remaining to the present day, seems to prove that the book, at least this verse, was not written till after Joshua's time; the same may be said of the account of Ai, that Joshua made it a heap for ever, even a desolation to the present day, Joshua 8:28, which is a proof, however, that the book was not written after the time of the kings, as Ai subsisted after the return from the captivity; see Ezra 2:28: The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty and three. It is supposed also, that the relation of the marriage of Achsah, daughter of Caleb, with Othniel the son of Kenaz, necessarily belongs to the time of the Judges; Joshua 15:16-19; as also the account of the capture of Leshem by the Danites Joshua 19:47, compared with Judges 18:7, 29. "What is related, Joshua 15:63, concerning the Jebusites dwelling with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day, must certainly have been written before the time of David; for he took the strong hold of Zion, and expelled the Jebusites; see 2 Samuel 5:7-9. Also, what is said, Joshua 16:10, They drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer, but they dwelt among the Ephraimites unto this day, must have been written before the time of Solomon, for in his time Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had taken Gezer, burnt it with fire, slain the Canaanites that dwelt in it, and given it a present to his daughter, the wife of Solomon, 1 Kings 9:16. The country of Cabul, mentioned Joshua 19:27, had not this name till the time of Solomon, as appears from 1 Kings 9:13; and the city called Joktheel, Joshua 15:38, had not this name till the reign of Joash, as appears from 2 Kings 14:7, it having been previously called Selah. The like may be said of Tyre, Joshua 19:29; and of Galilee Joshua 20:7; 21:32." These are the principal objections which are made against the book as being the work of Joshua. Some of these difficulties might be so removed as to render it still probable that Joshua was the author of the whole book, as some think to be intimated Joshua 24:26; And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of the Lord; (but this probably refers to nothing more than the words of the covenant which was then made, and which is included in Joshua 24:2-24;) but there are other difficulties that cannot be removed on the above supposition and therefore it has been generally supposed that the book was written by some inspired person after the time of Joshua; and positively before many kings had reigned in Israel. The book has been attributed to Samuel, though some give this honor to Ezra. After all, I cannot help considering the book in the main as the composition of Joshua

himself. It is certain that Moses kept an accurate register of all the events that took place during his administration in the wilderness, at least from the giving of the law to the time of his death. And in that wilderness he wrote the book of Genesis, as well as the others that bear his name. Now, it is not likely that Joshua, the constant servant and companion of Moses, could see all this—be convinced, as he must be, of its utility—and not adopt the same practice; especially as at the death of Moses he came into the same office. I therefore take it for granted, that the Book of Joshua is as truly his work, as the Commentaries of Caesar are his; and all the real difficulties mentioned above may be rationally and satisfactorily accounted for on the ground, that in transcribing this book in after ages, especially between the times of Joshua and the Kings, some few changes were made, and a very few slight additions, which referred chiefly to the insertion of names by which cities were then known instead of those by which they had been anciently denominated. This book therefore I conceive to be not the work of Ezra, nor of Samuel, nor of any other person of those times; nor can I allow that “it is called the Book of Joshua, because he is the chief subject of it, as the heroic poem of Virgil is called the *AENEIS*, because of the prince whose travels and actions it relates;” but I conceive it to be called the Book of Joshua, 1. Because Joshua wrote it. 2. Because it is the relation of his own conduct in the conquest, division, and settlement of the promised land. 3. Because it contains a multitude of particulars that only himself, or a constant eye-witness, could possibly relate. 4. Because it was evidently designed to be a continuation of the Book of Deuteronomy, and is so connected with it, in narrative, as to prove that it must have been immediately commenced on the termination of the other. 5. I might add to this, that with the exception of a few individuals, the whole of the ancient Jewish and Christian Churches have uniformly acknowledged Joshua to be its author. The Book of Joshua is one of the most important writings in the old covenant, and should never be separated from the Pentateuch, of which it is at once both the continuation and completion. Between this Book and the five Books of Moses, there is the same analogy as between the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The PENTATEUCH contains a history of the ACTS of the great Jewish legislator, and the LAWS on which the Jewish Church should be established. The Book of JOSHUA gives an account of the establishment of that Church in the Land of Canaan, according to the oft-repeated promises and declarations of God. The

GOSPELS give an account of the transactions of JESUS CHRIST, the great Christian legislator, and of those LAWS on which his Church should be established, and by which it should be governed. The ACTS of the APOSTLES gives an account of the actual establishment of that Church, according to the predictions and promises of its great founder. Thus, then, the Pentateuch bears as pointed a relation to the Gospels as the Book of Joshua does to the Acts of the Apostles. And we might, with great appearance of probability, carry this analogy yet farther, and show that the writings of several of the Prophets bear as strict a relation to the Apostolical Epistles, as the Books of Ezekiel and Daniel do to the Apocalypse. On this very ground of analogy Christ obviously founded the Christian Church; hence he had his twelve disciples, from whom the Christian Church was to spring, as the Jewish Church or twelve tribes sprang from the twelve sons of Jacob. He had his seventy or seventy-two disciples, in reference to the seventy-two elders, six chosen out of each of the twelve tribes, who were united with Moses and Aaron in the administration of justice, etc., among the people. CHRIST united in his person the characters both of Moses and Aaron, or legislator and high priest; hence he ever considers himself, and is considered by his apostles and followers, the same in the Christian Church that MOSES and AARON were in the Jewish. As a rite of initiation into his Church, he instituted baptism in the place of circumcision, both being types of the purification of the heart and holiness of life; and as a rite of establishment and confirmation, the holy eucharist in place of the paschal lamb, both being intended to commemorate the atonement made to God for the sins of the people. The analogies are so abundant, and indeed universal, that time would fail to enumerate them. On this very principle it would be a matter of high utility to read these Old Testament and the New Testament books together, as they reflect a strong and mutual light on each other, bear the most decided testimony to the words and truth of prophecy, and show the ample fulfillment of all the ancient and gracious designs of God. This appears particularly evident in the five Books of Moses and the Book of Joshua compared and collated with the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; and the analogy will be the more complete as to the number of those books, though that is a matter of minor consideration, when we consider Joshua, as we ought, a continuation of the Book of Deuteronomy, though written by a different hand, which two books should be rated only



as one history. Of Judges and Ruth it may be said they are a sort of supplement to the Book of Joshua. Whoever goes immediately from the reading of the Pentateuch to the reading of the Gospels, and from the reading of Joshua to that of the Acts, will carry with him advantages which on no other plan he will be able to command. Even a commentator himself will derive advantages from this plan, which he will seek in vain from any other. To see the wisdom and goodness of God in the ritual of Moses, we must have an eye continually on the incarnation and death of Christ, to which it refers. And to have a proper view of the great atonement made by the sacrifice of our Lord, we must have a constant reference to the Mosaic law, where this is shadowed forth. Without this reference the law of Moses is a system of expensive and burdensome ceremonies, destitute of adequate meaning; and without this entering in of the law that the offense might abound, to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the frailty of man, and the holiness of God; the Gospel of Christ, including the account of his incarnation, preaching, miracles, passion, death, burial, ascension, and intercession, would not appear to have a sufficient necessity to explain and justify it. By the LAW is the knowledge of sin, and by the GOSPEL its cure. Either, taken separately, will not answer the purpose for which God gave these astonishing revelations of his justice and his grace.

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Joshua circumcises the Israelites; they keep their first passover; and Joshua is encouraged by the appearance of an extraordinary person, who calls himself Captain of the Lord's host; Joshua 5. The Israelites invest Jericho, and surround it seven days, the priests blowing with seven trumpets. On the seventh day, at the command of Joshua, the people shout, and the walls of Jericho fall down; the Israelites enter and put all to the sword, except Rahab and her family. The city is laid under a curse; Joshua 6. Three thousand men, being sent against Ai, are repulsed, and thirty-six of them slain; Joshua being distressed, and the people greatly discouraged, he inquires of the Lord why they fell before their enemies? And is answered that, contrary to the express command of God, some of the people had secreted part of the spoils of Jericho, which they had been ordered wholly to destroy. An inquiry is instituted, and Achan, the son of Zerah, is discovered to have taken a rich Babylonish garment, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold. He is sentenced to be stoned. He and all his property, his asses, sheep, oxen, and tent, are destroyed in the valley of Achor, and a heap of stones raised over the place; Joshua 7. Thirty thousand men attack Ai, and take it by stratagem; they put the inhabitants to the sword, to the amount of twelve thousand persons, and hang the king; they preserve the cattle and spoil to themselves. Joshua builds an altar to the Lord, and offers sacrifices, writes the law upon the stones of it and reads all the blessings and curses over against Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, as the Lord commanded Moses; Joshua 8. The Gibeonites send ambassadors to the Israelites, and, pretending to be of a very distant nation, get the princes of Israel to make a league with them; the deception is discovered, and they are condemned to a state of perpetual slavery; Joshua 9. The kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, attack the Gibeonites, because they had made a league with the Israelites. They send to Joshua for assistance. Joshua attacks those five kings, and during the battle, by an extraordinary fall of hail-stones, many are killed; and at the intercession of Joshua, the sun and moon stand still, and the day is prolonged till all the confederate Amorites are destroyed. The five kings are taken in a cave at Makkedah, brought out and hanged. The Israelites afterwards take and destroy Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, Debir, and all the country of the hills, south, vale, and springs; Joshua 10. Many Canaanite, Amorite, Hittite, Perizzite, Jebusite, and Hivite kings join together against Israel; Joshua attacks and discomfits

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the book of the law. Joshua dies aged 110 years, and shortly after Eleazar, the high priest, dies also; Joshua 24. N. B. In pursuance of the promise made in the General Preface, I have given in the Chronological note at the head of each transaction, in the following book, not only the Year of the World, the Year before Christ, and the Year of the Exodus from Egypt, but also the Year before the first OLYMPIAD. According to the Arundelian Marbles, and the most accurate computation, the first OLYMPIAD commenced in the 3938th year of the Julian Period; 3228 years from the Creation; 780 years from the foundation of the Athenian Empire-408 years after the taking of Troy; 24 years before the building of Rome, and 776 before the incarnation of our Lord.

# THE BOOK

OF

# JOSHUA

- Year before the common Year of Christ, 1451.
- Julian Period, 3263.
- Cycle of the Sun, 10.
- Dominical Letter, B.
- Cycle of the Moon, 10.
- Indiction, 15.
- Creation from Tisri or September, 2553.

## CHAPTER 1

*Moses being dead, God commissions Joshua to bring the people into the promised land, 1, 2. The extent of the land to be possessed, 3, 4. Joshua is assured of victory over all his enemies, and is exhorted to courage and activity, 5, 6; and to be careful to act, in all things, according to the law of Moses, in which he us to meditate day and night, 7, 8. He is again exhorted to courage, with the promise of continued support, 9. Joshua commands the officers to prepare the people for their passage over Jordan, 10, 11. The Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, are put in mind of their engagement to pass over with their brethren, 12-15. They promise the strictest obedience, and pray for the prosperity of their leader, 16-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1.** *Now after the death of Moses* וַיְהִי *vayehi*, and it was or happened after the death of Moses. Even the first words in this book show it to be a continuation of the preceding, and intimately connected with the narrative in the last chapter in Deuteronomy, of which I suppose Joshua to have been the author, and that chapter to have originally made the commencement of this book. See the notes there. The time referred to here must have been at the conclusion of the thirty days in which they mourned for Moses.

**Verse 2.** *Moses my servant* The word, servant, as applied both to Moses and Joshua, is to be understood in a very peculiar sense. It signifies God's prime minister, the person by whom he issued his orders, and by whom he accomplished all his purposes and designs. No person ever bore this title in the like sense but the Redeemer of mankind, of whom Moses and Joshua were types.

**Go over this Jordan** The account given by Josephus of this river may not be unacceptable here. "Panium is thought to be the mountain of Jordan, but in reality it is carried thither in an occult manner from the place called

Phiala. This place lies on the road to Trachonitis, and is one hundred and twenty furlongs from Caesarea, not far out of the road, on the right hand. It has its name Phiala, (a bowl or basin,) very justly, from the roundness of its circumference, being round like a wheel. It is always full, without ever sinking or running over. This origin of the Jordan was not known till the time of Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis, who having ordered some chaff to be thrown in at Phiala, it was found at Panium. Jordan's visible stream arises from this cavern, (Panium,) and divides the marshes and fens of the lake Semechon; and when it has run another hundred and twenty furlongs, it first passes by the city Julias, and then passes through the middle of the lake Gennesareth, after which, running a long way over the desert, it empties itself into the lake Asphaltites." -WAR, book iii. chap. x., sect. 7. See the note on Numbers 34:12.

**Verse 3. *The sole of your foot shalt tread upon*** That is, the whole land occupied by the seven Canaanitish nations, and as far as the Euphrates on the east; for this was certainly the utmost of the grant now made to them; and all that was included in what is termed the promised land, the boundaries of which have already been defined. See Deuteronomy 34:1-4, and see Joshua 1:4 below. It has been supposed that the words, Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, were intended to express the ease with which they were to conquer the whole land, an instance of which occurs in the taking of Jericho. It was only their unfaithfulness to God that rendered the conquest in any case difficult.

**Verse 4. *From the wilderness and this Lebanon*** Joshua appears to be standing with his face towards the promised land, and pointing out the different places, or their situation, with his hand, THIS Lebanon, etc. The utmost of their limits should be from the desert of Arabia Petraea on the SOUTH to Lebanon on the NORTH: and from the Euphrates on the EAST to the Mediterranean Sea on the WEST. The Israelites did not possess the full extent of this grant till the days of David. See 2 Samuel 8:3, etc., and 2 Chronicles 9:26.

***Land of the Hittites*** These are generally reputed to have been the most hardy and warlike of all the Canaanitish nations; and as they occupied the mountainous countries on the south of the land of Canaan, it is natural to suppose that they would be the most difficult to subdue, and on this

account, it is supposed, God particularly specifies these: “Ye shall subdue and possess even all the land of the Hittites,” but it is probable that under this one term all the other nations are included, as it is certain they are in other places under the term Amorites. Great sea: The Mediterranean, called great in respect of the lakes in the land of Judea, such as the sea of Gennesareth, or the sea of Tiberias, and the Dead Sea, which were comparatively small lakes; but the Hebrews gave the name of sea, יָם yam, to every large collection of waters.

**Verse 5. *Be able to stand before thee*** Because God shall be with thee, therefore thou shalt be irresistible. This promise was most punctually literally fulfilled.

**Verse 7. *Only be thou strong, and very courageous*** ισχυε ουν, και ανδριζου σφοδρα. — Sept. Be strong therefore, and play the man to the uttermost. Though God had promised him that no man should be able to stand before him, yet it was on condition that he should use all his military skill, and avail himself to the uttermost of all the means, natural and providential, which God should place within his reach. God will not have them who refuse to help themselves.

**Verse 8. *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth*** The law which had already been written by Moses, and from which he and the people were to take all those precepts by which their lives were to be governed. Though there was a copy of the law laid up in the sanctuary, yet this was not sufficient. Joshua must have a copy for himself, and he was to consult it incessantly, that his way might be made prosperous, and that he might have good success. If he kept God’s word, God would keep him in body and soul; if he should observe to do according to that word, then God would cause all his way to be prosperous. Those who are obedient to God lack no manner of thing that is good.

**Verse 10. *Commanded the officers*** שׂוֹטְרִים shoterim. These were different from the שׁוֹפְטִים shophetim, who were judges among the people, and whose business it was to determine in all civil cases. The shoterim have been supposed to be subordinate officers, whose business it was to see the decisions of the shophetim carried into effect. Calmet conjectures that the shoterim here may have been the heralds of the army like those so



often met with in Homer, who were called the messengers both of the gods and men; who bore sceptres, and whose persons were ever held sacred. See on Deuteronomy 1:13, 16.

**Verse 11. Prepare you victuals** צָדָה tsedah, such prey or provisions as they had taken from the conquered countries, such as corn, oxen, sheep, etc.; for the word signifies prey, or what is taken by hunting, etc. This was necessary, as they were about to undergo considerable fatigue in marching, and in making preparations for the passage of the Jordan; for although the manna had not ceased to fall, yet such other provisions as are mentioned above were necessary on this occasion.

**For within three days ye shall pass** Calmet contends, with great appearance of truth, that these three days should be reckoned from the first day of their encamping at Jordan, three days after the return of the spies, i.e., on the eighth day of the first month, on the tenth of which they passed over Jordan. The text therefore is supposed to mean, Prepare victuals for three days' march, for "on the third day after your decampment from Shittim ye shall pass over this Jordan."

**Verse 13. Remember the word** He puts the Reubenites, etc., in remembrance of the engagements they had made with Moses (See Numbers 32:20) when he granted them their portion on the east side of Jordan.

**Verse 14. Your wives, your little ones** And with these it appears, from Numbers 32:17, were left behind 70, 580 effective men to guard them and their property; only 40, 000 having passed over Jordan to assist the nine tribes and half to conquer the land. See Joshua 4:13.

**Armed** חַמּוּשִׁים chamushim, by fives; in several lines, five in front, probably the usual method of marching; but it seems to signify arrayed, equipped, accoutred, well-armed, and ready for battle. See the note on Exodus 13:18.

**Verse 15. Toward the sun-rising.** This is the EAST, as toward the going down of the sun signifies the WEST.

**Verse 16. *All that thou commandest us we will do*** Here they acknowledge the Divine mission of Joshua, as they had done that of Moses, and consequently promise to follow his directions in all things.

**Verse 17. *Only the Lord thy God be with thee*** Provided God be with thee, as he was with Moses, we will implicitly obey thee. The words however may mean no more than an earnest prayer for Joshua's prosperity: May God be with thee, as he was with Moses!

**Verse 18. *He shall be put to death*** This was martial law; he who disobeyed the command of his general should be put to death. To this the people agreed, and it was essentially necessary in order that proper discipline should be kept up in this great army. By insubordination their fathers had suffered much in the wilderness; they rejected the authority of Moses, mutinied and made themselves a leader to conduct them back to Egypt. (See Numbers 14:4.) And Joshua himself, for attempting to encourage them against their fears, was near being stoned to death. It was necessary, therefore, that they should give him the most positive assurance that they would not act as their fathers had done. 1. NOTWITHSTANDING the great honor God put on his servants Moses, Aaron, Phinehas, and Joshua, yet we find him using every means to induce the people to trust in himself alone. Hence he is ever showing them that even those great men had nothing but what they had received, and that they were as fully dependent upon himself as the meanest of the people. What was even Moses without his GOD? 2. Is it not strange that at the death of Moses utter despair had not overwhelmed the whole camp, as he whom they expected to give them rest had died before any conquest was made in Canaan? We find, however, that they are not discouraged; he who gave them Moses, has now given them Joshua in his place; and they had now fully learned that if God be for them, none could be successfully against them. 3. From all this we may learn, that when God has a great work to accomplish, he will provide himself suitable instruments; and though one which he has greatly honored, appear to fail, we should know that he is not confined to work by that one alone. He has way every where, and all things serve the purposes of his will. He will as surely support his Church on earth, as he will support the earth itself; and while the sun and moon endure, the Church shall flourish: this is for his own honor, and he certainly is more concerned for his own glory in the administration of

justice, judgment, and salvation in the earth, than any of the children of men can possibly be. 4. Though God had so implicitly promised them his help, yet he strongly insists on their own co-operation. He requires the use of every power and talent he has given; even Joshua himself must be strong and very courageous, and the people must obey him in all things, in order that they may go over the Jordan to possess the good land; and without this they had never got into the promised rest. Shall we suppose, then, that if we be not workers together with God we shall be saved? Vain expectation! He works in us to will and to do, i.e., he gives the principle of volition in things that are holy, and the principle of power to bring the acts of will into good practical effect; therefore, says the apostle, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Will, therefore, under the influence of the gracious principle of volition; act under the influence of the principle of power. Without the power you can neither will nor do; but having the power it is your duty to will and do. It is enough that God gives the power. It is our duty, when we receive these talents, to improve them. In a million of cases a man may be both able to will and to do, and yet do neither to the salvation of his soul.

## CHAPTER 2

*Joshua sends out two spies to examine the state of the inhabitants of the land, particularly those of Jericho, who are entertained at the house of Rahab, 1. The king of Jericho is informed of their being in the town, and sends to Rahab, commanding her to deliver them up, 2, 3. She hides the spies, and tells the messengers that the men were departed and gone towards the mountain, 4, 5. When the officers of the king of Jericho were departed, she took the spies to the house-top, and covered them with flax, 6, 7. She relates to them that the fear of the Israelites had fallen on all the inhabitants of the country on hearing of their victories over the Amorites; that she knew none could resist the God of Israel, and therefore desired them to give her an oath that, when they took Jericho, they would preserve the lives of her and her family, 8-13. The spies swear to her, 14. She lets them down by a cord from the house-top, and gives them directions how to proceed, in order to avoid the pursuers, 15, 16. She is to tie a scarlet line to the window, through which she had let them down, which should be the sign to the Israelites to spare that house and its inhabitants, 17-19. Having bound her to secrecy, they depart, 20, 21. After three days' stay in the mountain, they return to Joshua, and make a favorable report, 22-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. Joshua-sent-two men to spy secretly** It is very likely that these spies had been sent out soon after the death of Moses, and therefore our marginal reading, had sent, is to be preferred. Secretly-It is very probable also that these were confidential persons, and that the transaction was between them and him alone. As they were to pass over the Jordan opposite to Jericho, it was necessary that they should have possession of this city, that in case of any reverses they might have no enemies in their rear. He sent the men, therefore, to see the state of the city, avenues of approach, fortifications, etc., that he might the better concert his mode of attack.

*A harlot's house* Harlots and inn-keepers seem to have been called by the same name, as no doubt many who followed this mode of life, from their exposed situation, were not the most correct in their morals. Among the ancients women generally kept houses of entertainment, and among the Egyptians and Greeks this was common. I shall subjoin a few proofs. HERODOTUS, speaking concerning the many differences between Egypt and other countries, and the peculiarity of their laws and customs, expressly says: *εν τοισι αι μεν γυναικες αγοραζουσι και καπηλευουσι οι δε ανδρες, κατ' οικους εοντες, υφαινουσι*. “Among the Egyptians the women carry on all commercial concerns, and keep taverns, while the men continue at home and weave.” Herod. in Euterp., c. xxxv. DIODORUS SICULUS, lib. i., s. 8, and c. xxvii., asserts that “the men were the slaves of the women in Egypt, and that it is stipulated in the marriage contract that the woman shall be the ruler of her husband, and that he shall obey her in all things.” The same historian supposes that women had these high privileges among the Egyptians, to perpetuate the memory of the beneficent administration of Isis, who was afterwards deified among them. NYMPHODORUS, quoted by the ancient scholiast on the OEdipus Coloneus of Sophocles, accounts for these customs: he says that “Sesostris, finding the population of Egypt rapidly increasing, fearing that he should not be able to govern the people or keep them united under one head, obliged the men to assume the occupations of women, in order that they might be rendered effeminate.” Sophocles confirms the account given by Herodotus; speaking of Egypt he says: —

*εκει γαρ οι μεν αρσενες κατα στεγας  
θακουσιν ιστουργουντες αι δε ξυνομοι  
τα 'ξω βιου τροφεια προσυνουσ' αι.*

OEdip. Col. v. 352.

“There the men stay in their houses weaving cloth, while the women transact all business out of doors, provide food for the family,” etc. It is on this passage that the scholiast cites Nymphodorus for the information given above, and which he says is found in the 13th chapter of his work “On the Customs of Barbarous Nations.” That the same custom prevailed among the Greeks we have the following proof from APULEIUS: *Ego vero quod primate ingressui stabulum conspicatus sum, accessi, et de QUADAM ANU CAUPONA illico percontor.* — Aletam. lib. i., p. 18, Edit. Bip.

“Having entered into the first inn I met with, and there seeing a certain OLD WOMAN, the INN-KEEPER, I inquired of her.” It is very likely that women kept the places of public entertainment among the Philistines; and that it was with such a one, and not with a harlot, that Samson lodged; (see Judges 16:1, etc. ;) for as this custom certainly did prevail among the Egyptians, of which we have the fullest proof above, we may naturally expect it to have prevailed also among the Canaanites and Philistines, as we find from Apuleius that it did afterwards among the Greeks. Besides there is more than presumptive proof that this custom obtained among the Israelites themselves, even in the most polished period of their history; for it is much more reasonable to suppose that the two women, who came to Solomon for judgment, relative to the dead child, (1 Kings 3:16, etc. ;) were inn-keepers, than that they were harlots. It is well known that common prostitutes, from their abandoned course of life, scarcely ever have children; and the laws were so strict against such in Israel, (Deuteronomy 23:18,) that if these had been of that class it is not at all likely they would have dared to appear before Solomon. All these circumstances considered, I am fully satisfied that the term זונה zonah in the text, which we translate harlot, should be rendered tavern or inn-keeper, or hostess. The spies who were sent out on this occasion were undoubtedly the most confidential persons that Joshua had in his host; they went on an errand of the most weighty importance, and which involved the greatest consequences. The risk they ran of losing their lives in this enterprise was extreme. Is it therefore likely that persons who could not escape apprehension and death, without the miraculous interference of God, should in despite of that law which at this time must have been so well known unto them, go into a place where they might expect, not the blessing, but the curse, of God? Is it not therefore more likely that they went rather to an inn to lodge than to a brothel? But what completes in my judgment the evidence on this point is, that this very Rahab, whom we call a harlot, was actually married to Salmon, a Jewish prince, see Matthew 1:5. And is it probable that a prince of Judah would have taken to wife such a person as our text represents Rahab to be? It is granted that the Septuagint, who are followed by Hebrews 11:31, and James 2:25, translate the Hebrew זונה zonah by πορνη, which generally signifies a prostitute; but it is not absolutely evident that the Septuagint used the word in this sense. Every scholar knows that the Greek word πορνη comes from πρῶναι, to sell, as this

does from **περᾶω**, to pass from one to another; transire facio a me ad alterum; DAMM. But may not this be spoken as well of the woman's goods as of her person? In this sense the Chaldee Targum understood the term, and has therefore translated it **אתתא פונדקיתהא** ittetha pundekitha, a woman, a TAVERN-KEEPER. That this is the true sense many eminent men are of opinion; and the preceding arguments render it at least very probable. To all this may be added, that as our blessed Lord came through the line of this woman, it cannot be a matter of little consequence to know what moral character she sustained; as an inn-keeper she might be respectable, if not honorable; as a public prostitute she could be neither; and it is not very likely that the providence of God would have suffered a person of such a notoriously bad character to enter into the sacred line of his genealogy. It is true that the cases of Tamar and Bathsheba may be thought sufficient to destroy this argument; but whoever considers these two cases maturely will see that they differ totally from that of Rahab, if we allow the word harlot to be legitimate. As to the objection that her husband is nowhere mentioned in the account here given; it appears to me to have little weight. She might have been either a single woman or a widow; and in either of these cases there could have been no mention of a husband; or if she even had a husband it is not likely he would have been mentioned on this occasion, as the secret seems to have been kept religiously between her and the spies. If she were a married woman her husband might be included in the general terms, all that she had, and all her kindred, Joshua 6:23. But it is most likely that she was a single woman or a widow, who got her bread honestly by keeping a house of entertainment for strangers. See below.

**Verse 3. *The king of Jericho sent unto Rahab*** This appears to be a proof of the preceding opinion: had she been a prostitute or a person of ill fame he could at once have sent officers to have seized the persons lodged with her as vagabonds; but if she kept a house of entertainment, the persons under her roof were sacred, according to the universal custom of the Asiatics, and could not be molested on any trifling grounds. A guest or a friend is sacred in whatever house he may be received, in every part of the east to the present day.

**Verse 4. *And hid them*** Probably she secreted them for the time being in some private corner, till she had the opportunity of concealing them on the house-top in the manner mentioned Joshua 2:6.

**Verse 5. *When it was dark*** So it appears that it was after night that the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, ordering her to produce the persons who lodged with her. The season itself was friendly to the whole plot: had these transactions taken place in daylight, it is scarcely possible that the spies could have escaped. But this is no excuse for the woman's prevarication, for God could have saved his messengers independently of her falsity. God never says to any, Do evil that good may come of it. See at the end of the chapter.

**Verse 6. *Hid then with the stalks of flax*** It is a matter of little consequence whether we translate פִּסְתֵי הָעֵיץ pistey haets stalks of flax, or stalks of hemp: the word עֵץ ets, which signifies wood, serves to show that whether it was hemp or flax, it was in its rough, unmanufactured state; and as this was about the season, viz., the end of March or the beginning of April, in which the flax is ripe in that country, consequently Rahab's flax might have been recently pulled, and was now drying on the roof of her house. The reader may find some useful remarks upon this subject in Harmer's Observations, vol. iv., p. 97, etc.

***Upon the roof.*** We have already seen that all the houses in the east were made flat-roofed; for which a law is given Deuteronomy 22:8. On these flat roofs the Asiatics to this day walk, converse, and oftentimes even sleep and pass the night. It is probable that this hiding was after that referred to in the fourth verse.

**Verse 9. *I know that the Lord hath green you the land*** It is likely she had this only from conjecture, having heard of their successes against the Amorites, their prodigious numbers, and seeing the state of terror and dismay to which the inhabitants of her own land were reduced.

**Verse 11. *He is God in heaven above, and to earth beneath.*** This confession of the true God is amazingly full, and argues considerable light and information. As if she had said, "I know your God to be omnipotent and omnipresent:" and in consequence of this faith she hid the spies, and risked her own life in doing it. But how had she this clear knowledge of the



Divine nature? 1. Possibly the knowledge of the true God was general in the earth at this time, though connected with much superstition and idolatry; the people believing that there was a god for every district, and for every people; for the mountains and for the valleys; see 1 Kings 20:23. 2. Or she received this instruction from the spies, with whom she appears to have had a good deal of conversation; or, 3. She had it from a supernatural influence of God upon her own soul. She probably made a better use of the light she had received than the rest of her countrymen, and God increased that light.

**Verse 12. *Swear unto me by the Lord*** This is a farther proof that this woman had received considerable instruction in the Jewish faith; she acknowledged the true God by his essential character Jehovah; and knew that an oath in his name was the deepest and most solemn obligation under which a Jew could possibly come. Does not this also refer to the command of God, Thou shalt fear the Lord, and shalt swear by his name? See the note on Deuteronomy 6:13.

**Verse 13. *Deliver our lives from death.*** She had learned, either from the spies or otherwise, that all the inhabitants of the land were doomed to destruction, and therefore she obliges them to enter into a covenant with her for the preservation of herself and her household.

**Verse 14. *Our life for yours*** “May our life be destroyed if we suffer yours to be injured!” This is what was anciently called in our country pledging-staking, a man’s life for that of his neighbor or friend.

**Verse 15. *Then she let them down by a cord etc.*** The natural place of this verse is after the first clause of Joshua 2:21; for it is certain that she did not let them down in the basket till all those circumstances marked from Joshua 2:16-20 inclusive had taken place.

***She dwelt upon the wall.*** That is, either the wall of the city made a part of her house or her house was built close to the wall, so that the top or battlements of it were above the wall with a window that looked out to the country. As the city gates were now shut there was no way for the spies to escape but through this window; and in order to this she let them down through the window in a basket suspended by a cord, till they reached the ground on the outside of the wall.

**Verse 16. *Hide yourselves there three days*** They were to travel by night, and hide themselves in the day-time; otherwise they might have been discovered by the pursuers who were in search of them.

**Verse 18. *This line of scarlet thread*** תיקות חוט השני tikvath chut hashshani. Probably this may mean, this piece of scarlet cloth, or, this cloth (made) of scarlet thread. When the Israelites took the city this piece of red cloth seems to have been hung out of the window by way of flag; and this was the sign on which she and the spies had agreed.

**Verse 20. *If thou utter this our business*** It was prudent to make her life depend on her secrecy; had it been otherwise she might have been tempted to give information, not only concerning the spies, but concerning the designs of the Israelites. But her life being at stake, added to every other motive, she kept the secret for the sake of her own personal safety and that of all her relatives.

**Verse 23. *So the two men returned*** Having concealed themselves in the mountains that night, all the next day, and the night ensuing, on the third day they returned to Joshua.

**Verse 24. *Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land***  
How different was this report from that brought by the spies on a former occasion! They found that all the inhabitants of the land were panic-struck. The people had heard of the great exploits of the Israelites on the other side of Jordan; and as they had destroyed the potent kings of the Amorites, they took it for granted that nothing could stand before them. This information was necessary to Joshua to guide him in forming the plan of his campaign. 1. It may be asked, Did not Rahab lie in the account she gave to the officers of the king of Jericho, (Joshua 2:4, 5,) There came men unto me, etc.? I answer, She certainly did; and the inspired writer sets down the fact merely as it stood, without making the Spirit of God responsible for the dissimulation of the woman. But was she not rewarded, etc.? Yes; for her hospitality and faith, not for her lie. But could she have saved the spies without telling a lie? Yes, she certainly might; but what notion could a woman of her occupation, though nothing worse than an inn-keeper, have of the nicer distinctions between truth and falsehood, living among a most profligate and depraved people, where truth could scarcely be known? 2. There is a lax morality in the world that

recommends a lie rather than the truth, when the purposes of religion and humanity can be served by it. But when can this be? The religion of Christ is one eternal system of truth, and can neither be served by a lie nor admit one. On this vile subject fine words have been spoken. Tasso, in his elegant episode of Sophronia and Olindo, in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, b. ii., v. 22, represents the former as telling a lie to Saladdin, relative to the stealing of an image, for which, as he could not discover the culprit, he doomed all the Christians in his power to death. Sophronia, a pious Christian virgin, getting into the presence of the tyrant, in order to save her people, accuses herself, though perfectly innocent, of the theft. Her conduct on this occasion the poet embellishes in the following manner, for which the religion of that time, which dealt in holy frauds, would no doubt applaud him.

*‘Ed ella: il reo si trova al tuo cospetto;  
Opra e il furto, Signor, di questa mano  
Io l’ immagine tolsi; Io son colei  
Che tu ricerchi, e me punir tu dei.  
Cosi al pubblico fato il capo altero  
Offerse, e ‘l volle in se sol racorre.  
MAGNANIMA MENZOGNA! or quando e il VERO  
SI BELLO, che si possa a te preporre?’*

*Then she: “Before thy sight the guilty stands;  
The theft, O King, committed by these hands.  
In me the thief who stole the image view!  
To me the punishment decreed is due.”  
Thus, filled with public zeal, the generous dame  
A victim for her people’s ransom came.  
O great deceit! O lie divinely fair!  
What truth with such a falsehood can compare!*

*HOOLE.*

Thus a lie is ornamented with splendid decorations both by the Italian and English poet, and the whole formed into an anti-apostolic maxim, Let us do EVIL, that GOOD may come of it. A purer morality was taught by one of

the most ancient heathen writers than is here preached by these demi-christians:—

εχθρος γαρ μοι κεινος, ομως αιδαο πυλησιν,  
 'ος χ' ετερον μεν κευθει ενι φρεσιν, αλλο δε βαζει.

Iliad. l. ix., v. 312.

*My soul detests him as the gates of hell,  
 Who knows the truth and dares a falsehood tell,*

The following is the advice of a genuine Christian poet, and one of the holiest men of his time: —

*LIE not; but let thy heart be true to God;  
 Thy tongue to it, thy actions to them both  
 Cowards tell lies, and those who fear the rod;  
 The stormy working soul spits lies and froth.  
 DARE TO BE TRUE! nothing can NEED a lie.  
 The fault that needs it most grows TWO thereby.*

**HERBERT.**

For other observations on this subject see the notes on Genesis 12:20, at the end, and Genesis 20:12. 3. Though the hand of God was evidently in every thing that concerned the Israelites, and they were taught to consider that by his might alone they were to be put in possession of the promised land; yet they were as fully convinced that if they did not use the counsel, prudence, and strength which they had received from him, they should not succeed. Hence, while they depended on the Divine direction and power, they exercised their own prudence, and put forth their own strength; and thus they were workers together with him, and did not receive the grace of God in vain. The application of this maxim is easy; and we cannot expect any success, either in things spiritual or temporal, unless we walk by the same rule and mind the same thing.

## CHAPTER 3

*The Israelitish camp removes from Shittim to Jordan, 1. The officers inform them how they are to pass the river, and the distance they are to keep from the ark, 2-4. Joshua directs the people, 5, 6; and the Lord gives directions to Joshua, 7, 8. He delivers the Lord's message to the people, and foretells the miraculous passage and division of Jordan, 9-13. The priests, bearing the ark, enter the river, and immediately the waters are cut off, and the priests stand on dry ground, in the bed of the river, till all the camp passes over, 14-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *Joshua rose early*** Archbishop Usher supposes that this was upon Wednesday, the 28th of April, A. M. 2553, the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt. From Shittim, where they had lately been encamped, to Jordan, was about sixty stadia, according to Josephus; that is, about eight English miles.

**Verse 2. *After three days*** These three days are probably to be thus understood: As soon as Joshua took the command of the army, he sent the spies to ascertain the state of Jericho; as we have seen Joshua 1:12. They returned at the end of three days, or rather on the third day, and made their report. It was at this time, immediately on the return of the spies, that he made the proclamation mentioned here; in consequence of which the people immediately struck their tents, and marched forward to Jordan.

**Verse 4. *About two thousand cubits*** This distance they were to keep, 1. For the greater respect, because the presence of the ark was the symbol and pledge of the Divine presence. 2. That the ark, which was to be their pilot over these waters, might be the more conspicuous which it could not have been had the people crowded upon it.

**Verse 5. *Sanctify yourselves*** What was implied in this command we are not informed; but it is likely that it was the same as that given by Moses, Exodus 19:10-14. They were to wash themselves and their garments, and

abstain from every thing that might indispose their minds from a profitable attention to the miracle about to be wrought in their behalf.

**Verse 6. *Spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark*** It is remarkable that the priests, not the Levites, whose ordinary business it was were employed to carry the ark on this occasion. Calmet conjectures that this was because it was probably carried without being wrapped up in its curtains, as it always was when the Levites carried it. Though it was the business of the Levites, the sons of Kohath, to carry the ark; yet on certain occasions the priests alone performed this office. 1. In the present case. 2. When they encompassed Jericho, Joshua 6:6. 3. When it was carried to the war against the Philistines by the priests, the sons of Eli, 2 Samuel 15:25. 4. When David sent it back to Jerusalem, at the time he was obliged to fly from it, through the rebellion of his son Absalom, 2 Samuel 15:25; and, 5. At the time that it was taken out of the tabernacle, to be deposited in the temple; see 1 Kings 8:6-11. These were the most solemn occasions, and on such alone, we may presume, the priests performed this office instead of the Levites. In all their former marches the ark was carried in the center of this immense camp; (see the scheme at the end of Numbers 2:2 of the book of Numbers;) but now it was to proceed at the head of the army, and to go before them, and at such a distance, about three quarters of a mile, that the whole camp might see it as their guide.

**Verse 7. *This day will I begin to magnify thee*** By making him the instrument in this miraculous passage, he did him honor and gave him high credit in the sight of the people: hence his authority was established, and obedience to him as their leader fully secured. What must have confirmed this authority was, his circumstantially foretelling how the waters should be cut off as soon as the feet of the priests had touched them, Joshua 3:13. This demonstrated that the secret of the Lord was with him.

**Verse 8. *Ye shall stand still in Jordan.*** The priests proceeded first with the ark, and entered into the bed of the river the course of which was immediately arrested, the waters collecting above the place where the priests stood, while the stream fell off towards the Dead Sea; so that the whole channel below where the priests were standing became dry. The whole camp, therefore, passed over below where the priests were standing, keeping at the distance of two thousand cubits from the ark; this they

would readily do, as the whole bed of the river was dry for many miles below the place where the priests entered.

**Verse 10. *Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you*** The Israelites were apt to be discouraged, and to faint at even the appearance of danger; it was necessary, therefore, that they should have the fullest assurance of the presence and assistance of God in the important enterprise on which they were now entering. They are to combat idolaters, who have nothing to trust in and help them but gods of wood, stone, and metal: whereas they are to have the living God in the midst of them—HE who is the author of life and of being—who can give, or take it away, at his pleasure; and who by this miracle proved that he had undertaken to guide and defend them: and Joshua makes this manifestation of God the proof that he will drive out the Hittites, Hivites, etc, before them. With regard to the situation of each of these nations in the land of Canaan, Calmet remarks, that those called CANAANITES chiefly inhabited what is called Phoenicia, the environs of Tyre and Sidon: the HITTITES occupied the mountains, southward of the promised land: the HIVITES dwelt by Ebal and Gerizim, Sichem and Gibeon, towards the mountains of Hermon: the PERIZZITES were probably not a distinct nation or tribe, but rather villagers, scattered through the country in general: the GIRGASHITES possessed the country beyond the Jordan, towards the lake of Gennesareth: the JEBUSITES possessed Jerusalem: and the AMORITES occupied the mountainous country in the vicinity of the western part of the Dead Sea, and also that part of the land of Moab which the Israelites conquered from Sihon and Og.

**Verse 12. *Take you twelve men*** See the note on Joshua 4:2.

**Verse 15. *And the feet of the priests—were dipped in the brim of the water*** Thus we find that every thing occurred exactly in the way in which Joshua had foretold it. This must have greatly increased his credit among the people.

***For Jordan overfloweth all his banks, etc.*** It has often been remarked that there was no need of a miracle in crossing Jordan, as it is but an inconsiderable stream, easily fordable, being but about twenty yards in breadth. But the circumstance marked here by the sacred historian proves that there was a time in the year, viz., in the harvest, that this said river

overflowed its banks; and this is confirmed by another place in Scripture, 1 Chronicles 12:15. As the miracle reported here took place about the beginning of April, a time in which rivers in general are less than in winter, it may be asked how there could be such an increase of waters at this time? The simple fact is, that the Jordan, as we have already seen, has its origin at the foot of Mount Lebanon, which mountain is always covered with snow during the winter months; in those months therefore the river is low: but when the summer's sun has melted these snows, there is consequently a prodigious increase of waters, so that the old channel is not capable of containing them; this accounts for the statement in the text that the Jordan overfloweth his banks all the time of harvest; and this was the time which God chose they should pass over it, that a miraculous interposition might be necessary, and that by the miracle they should be convinced of his omnipotence, who was not only their guide, but had promised to put them in possession of this good land.

**Verse 16. *Rose up upon a heap*** That is, they continued to accumulate, filling up the whole of the channel toward the source, and the adjacent ground over which they were now spread, to a much greater depth, the power of God giving a contrary direction to the current. We need not suppose them to be gathered up like a mountain, *instar montis*, as the Vulgate expresses it, but that they continued to flow back in the course of the channel; and ere they could have reached the lake of Gennesareth, where they might have been easily accumulated, the whole Israelitish army would have all got safely to the opposite side.

***Very far from the city Adam-beside Zaretan*** Where these places were it is difficult to say. The city Adam is wholly unknown. From 1 Kings 4:12 we learn that Zartanah was below Jezreel near Bethshean, or Scythopolis, and not far from Succoth, 1 Kings 7:46. And it appears from Genesis 33:17, Joshua 13:27, that Succoth lay on the east side of Jordan, not far from the lake of Gennesareth; and probably Adam was on the same side to the north of Succoth. It is probable that the Israelites crossed the Jordan near Bethabara, where John baptized, John 1:28, and which probably had its name, the house of passage, from this very circumstance. After all, it is extremely difficult to ascertain the exact situation of these places, as in the lapse of upwards of 3, 000 years the face of the country must have been materially changed. Seas, rivers, and mountains, change not; and though we



cannot ascertain the spot, it is sufficiently evident that we can come near to the place. It has been considered a lame objection against the truth of the Iliad that the situation of Troy cannot now be exactly ascertained. There are even many ancient cities and considerable towns in Europe, that, though they still bear their former names, do not occupy the same spot. There are not a few of those even in England; among such Norwich, Salisbury, etc., may be ranked, neither of which is in its primitive situation.

***Right against Jericho.*** It would be impossible for the whole camp to pass over in the space opposite to Jericho, as they must have taken up some miles in breadth, besides the 2, 000 cubits which were left on the right between them and the ark; but the river was divided opposite to Jericho, and there the camp began to pass over.

**Verse 17. *The priests stood firm on dry ground*** They stood in the mid channel, and shifted not their position till the camp, consisting of nearly 600, 000 effective men, besides women, children, etc., had passed over. 1. Is it not surprising that the Canaanites did not dispute this passage with the Israelites? It is likely they would, had they had any expectation that such a passage would have been attempted. They must have known that the Israelitish camp was on the other side of the Jordan, but could they have supposed that a passage for such a host was possible when the banks of the Jordan were quite overflowed? It was not merely because they were panic struck that they did not dispute this passage, but because they must have supposed it impossible; and when they found the attempt was made, the passage was effected before they could prepare to prevent it. 2. GOD now appears in such a way, and works in such a manner, as to leave no doubt concerning his presence or his power, or of his love to Israel. After this, was it possible for this people ever to doubt his being or his bounty? This, with the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, were well calculated to have established their faith for ever; and those who did not yield to the evidence afforded by these two miracles were incapable of rational conviction. 3. In some respects the passage of the Jordan was more strikingly miraculous than that even of the Red Sea. In the latter God was pleased to employ an agent; the sea went back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, Exodus 14:21. Nothing of this kind appeared in the passage of the Jordan; a very rapid river (for so all

travelers allow it to be) went back to its source without any kind of agency but the invisible hand of the invisible God. 4. Through the whole period of the Jewish history these miracles, so circumstantially related, were never denied by any, but on the contrary conscientiously believed by all. Nor did any of them in their revolts from God, which were both foul and frequent, ever call these great facts in question, when even so full of enmity against God as to blaspheme his name, and give his glory to dumb idols! Is not this a manifest proof that these facts were incontestable? and that Jehovah had so done his marvellous works that they should be had in everlasting remembrance? Reader, the same God who is over all is rich in mercy to all that call upon him. HE changes not, neither is he weary: trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength; and HE ever saves his followers out of the hands of all their enemies, and, having guided them by his counsel, will receive them into his glory.

## CHAPTER 4

*When the people are passed over, Joshua commands twelve men, one taken out of each tribe, to take up a stone on his shoulder out of the midst of the river, and carry it to the other side, to be set up as a memorial of this miraculous passage, 1-7. They do so, and set up the stones in the place where they encamp the first night, 8, 9. The priests stand in the river, till all the people are passed over, 10, 11. Of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 40, 000 fighting men pass over with the other tribes, 12, 13. Joshua is magnified in the sight of the people, and they fear him as they did Moses, 14. The priests are commanded to come up out of the river, which, on their leaving it, immediately returns, and overflows its banks as before, 15-18. This miraculous passage takes place the tenth day of the first month, 19. The stones are set up in Gilgal, and Joshua teaches the people what use they are to make of them, 20-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 2. *Take you twelve men*** From Joshua 3:12, it appears that the twelve men had been before appointed, one taken out of each of the twelve tribes; and now they are employed for that purpose for which they had been before selected.

**Verse 3. *Where ye shall lodge this night***. This was in the place that was afterwards called Gilgal. See Joshua 4:19.

**Verse 4. *Twelve men, whom he had prepared*** This must refer to their appointment, Joshua 3:12.

**Verse 6. *This may be a sign*** Stand as a continual memorial of this miraculous passage, and consequently a proof of their lasting obligation to God.

**Verse 9. *And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan*** It seems from this chapter that there were two sets of stones erected as a memorial

of this great event; twelve at Gilgal, Joshua 4:20 and twelve in the bed of Jordan, Joshua 4:9. The twelve stones in the bed of Jordan might have been so placed on a base of strong stone-work so high as always to be visible, and serve to mark the very spot where the priests stood with the ark. The twelve stones set up at Gilgal would stand as a monument of the place of the first encampment after this miraculous passage. Though this appears to me to be the meaning of this place, yet Dr. Kennicott's criticism here should not be passed by. "It is well known," says he, "that when Joshua led the Israelites over Jordan, he was commanded to take twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, to be a memorial that the ground in the very midst of that river had been made dry. But where was this memorial to be set up? The ninth verse says; Joshua set up these stones IN the midst of Jordan. But is it likely that the stones should be placed or set down where they were taken up; and that the memorial should be erected there where, when the river was again united, it would be concealed, and of course could be no memorial at all? This however flatly contradicts the rest of the chapter, which says these stones were pitched in Gilgal, where Israel lodged in Canaan for the first time. The solution of this difficulty is, that **בתוך** bethoch IN the midst, should be here **מתוך** mittoch, FROM the midst, as in Joshua 4:3, 8, 20, and as the word is here also in the Syrian version. The true rendering therefore is, And Joshua set up the twelve stones (taken) FROM the midst of Jordan," etc. I confess I see no need for this criticism, which is not supported by a single MS. either in his own or Deuteronomy Rossi's collection, though they amount to four hundred and ninety-four in number. Twelve stones might be gathered in different parts of the bed of the Jordan, and be set up as a pillar in another, and be a continual visible memorial of this grand event. And if twelve were set up in Gilgal as a memorial of their first encampment in Canaan, it is still more likely that twelve would be set up in the bed of the river to show where it had been divided, and the place where the whole Israelitish host had passed over dry-shod. The reader may follow the opinion he judges most likely.

**Verse 10. *And the people hasted and passed over.*** How very natural is this circumstance! The people seeing the waters divided, and Jordan running back, might be apprehensive that it would soon resume its wonted course; and this would naturally lead them to hasten to get over, with as

much speed as possible. The circumstance itself thus marked is a proof that the relater was an eyewitness of this miraculous passage.

**Verse 12. *The children of Reuben, and-Gad*** Concerning the numbers of these tribes that stayed behind to take care of the women, children, and cattle, and which amounted to 70, 580 men, see the note on Numbers 32:17.

***Passed over armed*** See the note on Joshua 1:14.

**Verse 14. *The Lord magnified Joshua*** See the note on Joshua 3:7.

**Verse 18. *The waters of Jordan returned unto their place*** It is particularly remarked by the sacred historian, that as soon as the soles of the priests' feet touched the water, the stream of the Jordan was cut off, Joshua 3:15, and the course of the river continued to be inverted all the time they continued in its channel; and that as soon as the soles of their feet had touched the dry land, on their return from the bed of the river, the waters immediately resumed their natural course. All this was done by the sovereign influence of that God whose presence was represented by the ark of the covenant.

**Verse 19. *On the tenth day of the first month*** As the Israelites left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month, A.M. 2513, (see Exodus 14:1-31,) and they entered into Canaan the tenth of the first month, A.M. 2553, it is evident that forty years, wanting five days, had elapsed from the time of their exodus from Egypt to their entrance into the promised inheritance.

***Encamped in Gilgal*** That is, in the place that was afterwards called Gilgal, see Joshua 5:9; for here the name is given it by anticipation. In Hebrew, גל gal signifies to roll; and the doubling of the root, גלגל galgal or gilgal, signifies rolling round and round, or rolling off or away, because, in circumcising the children that had been born in the wilderness, Joshua rolled away, rolled off completely, the reproach of the people. From this time Gilgal became a place of considerable eminence in the sacred history. 1. It was the place where the Israelitish camp rested the first night of their entering into that land which had been promised to their fathers from the days of Abraham. 2. It was the place in which Joshua circumcised all the people who had been born in the wilderness, during the forty years of their wandering, after they left Egypt. 3. It was the place in which Joshua had

what we might term his fortified camp, and to which he and his army constantly returned after each of their expeditions against the inhabitants of the land. 4. It appears to have been the place where all the women, children, cattle, and goods, etc., were lodged, probably during the whole of the Canaanitish war. 5. It was the place where they celebrated the first passover they kept in the promised land. 6. It was the place where Saul, the first king of Israel, was proclaimed. 7. There the manna ceased to fall. And, 8. There the ark was fixed till, after the conquest of the country, it was removed to Shiloh. Gilgal was about ten furlongs from Jericho, and fifty from Jordan: Jericho being on the west, and Jordan on the east, Gilgal being between both. See Josephus, Deuteronomy Bello, etc., lib. v., c. 4, and Calmet on this place. Calmet supposes there was neither city nor town here before the arrival of the Israelites.

**Verse 20. *Those twelve stones*** It is very likely that a base of mason-work was erected of some considerable height, and then the twelve stones placed on the top of it; and that this was the case both in Jordan and in Gilgal: for twelve such stones as a man could carry a considerable way on his shoulder, see Joshua 4:5, could scarcely have made any observable altar, or pillar of memorial: but erected on a high base of mason-work they would be very conspicuous, and thus properly answer the end for which God ordered them to be set up.

**Verse 22. *Then ye shall let your children know*** The necessity of an early religious education is inculcated through the whole oracles of God. The parents who neglect it have an awful account to give to the Judge of quick and dead.

**Verse 24. *That all the people of the earth might know*** It is very likely that כל עמי הארץ cog ammey haarets means simply, all the people of this land—all the Canaanitish nations, to whom, by the miracles wrought in behalf of his people, he intended to show his eternal power and Godhead, the excellence of his protection, and the unavailableness of human might against his omnipotence; and the miracles he wrought for this people, in the sight of the heathen, were well calculated to make these things known. 1. GOD intends that his religion should be maintained and propagated in the earth; therefore he has given a revelation of himself to men, that it may be taught in the world; and he particularly requires that parents should be

diligent and fervent in teaching their children the knowledge of his name. 2. This is one great use of the ordinances of the Gospel, and the rites of religion. They are all signifiers of sacred things, and point out matters of infinite importance beyond themselves. 3. A spirit of inquiry is common to every child: the human heart is ever panting after knowledge; and if not rightly directed when young, will, like that of our first mother, go astray after forbidden science. 4. If we wish our children to be happy we should show them where happiness is to be found. If we wish them to be wise, we should lead them unto God by means of his word and ordinances. It is natural for a child to inquire, “What do you mean by this baptism?-by this sacrament?. — by praying-by singing psalms and hymns?” etc. And what fine opportunities do such questions give pious and intelligent parents to instruct their children in every article of the Christian faith, and in every fact on which these articles are established! Oh why is this neglected, while the command of God is before our eyes, and the importance of the measure so strikingly obvious?

## CHAPTER 5

*The effect produced on the minds of the Canaanites by the late miracle, 1. Joshua is commanded to circumcise the Israelites, 2. He obeys, 3. Who they were that were circumcised, and why it was now done, 4-7. They abide in the camp till they are whole, 8. The place is called Gilgal, and why, 9. They keep the passover in the same place, 10. They eat unleavened cakes and parched corn, on the morrow after the passover, 11. The manna ceases, 12. The captain of the Lord's host appears to Joshua, 13-15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *The Amorites which were on the side of Jordan westward*** It has already been remarked that the term Amorite is applied sometimes to signify all the nations or tribes of Canaan. It appears from this verse that there were people thus denominated that dwelt on both sides of the Jordan. Those on the east side had already been destroyed in the war which the Israelites had with Sihon and Og; with those on the west side Joshua had not yet waged war. It is possible however that the Amorites of whom we read in this verse, were the remains of those who dwelt on the east side of the Jordan, and who had taken refuge here on the defeat of Og and Sihon.

**Verse 2. *Make thee sharp knives*** חַרְבוֹת צְרִיִם charboth tsurim, knives of rock, stone, or flint. Before the use of iron was common, all the nations of the earth had their edge-tools made of stones, flints, etc. In the lately discovered islands this is found to be a common case. Our ancestors in these countries made their arrow and spear-heads of flint: these I have often seen turned up by the plough. But we cannot suppose that at the time here referred to the Israelites were destitute of iron, and were therefore obliged to use knives made of stone or flint, their different manufactures in the wilderness prove that they must have had both iron and steel. Why then use knives made of stone? Probably it was unlawful to use metal of any kind in this religious rite; and indeed this seems likely



from the circumstance of Zipporah (Exodus 4:25) taking a sharp stone and circumcising her son; and we find, from the most ancient and authentic accounts, that the Egyptians considered it unlawful or profane to use any kind of metal to make incisions in the human body, when preparing it for embalming; see the note on Genesis 50:2, and on Exodus 4:25. That it was deemed improper to use any other kind of instrument in circumcision we have a proof in the tribe Alnajab, in Ethiopia, who follow the Mosaic institution, and perform the rite of circumcision, according to Ludolf, *cultris lapidibus*, with knives made of stone. — *Hist. Aethiop.*, lib. iii., c. 1. And as God commanded the people to make him an altar of unhewn stones, on which no tool of iron had been lifted up, because this would pollute it, (see Exodus 20:25, and Deuteronomy 27:5,) he might require that no instrument of iron should be used in a rite by which the body and soul of the person were in the most solemn and sacred manner dedicated to him to be his house and temple, the heart itself being the altar on which continual sacrifices to God must be offered. A physical reason has been given for preferring knives of stone in this operation, “the wound suffers less through inflammation, and is sooner healed.” For this a reason may be given. It is almost impossible to get an edge made so even and firm as not to leave particles of the metal in the incisions made even in the most delicate flesh; these particles would soon become oxidized by the action of the air, and extra inflammation in the part would be the consequence. The great aptitude of iron to be oxidized, i.e., to be converted to rust, is well known; but how far this reasoning, thus applied, may be supported by fact, I cannot pretend to determine: it is sufficiently evident that it was a common custom to use knives of stone in circumcision, and in all operations on those parts of the human body. I shall give a few examples. Pliny says, when they amputate certain parts they do it with a sharp stone, because nothing else could be employed without danger. *Samia testa virilitatem amputabant: nec aliter citra perniciem.* Ovid, *Fast.* lib. iv., ver. 237, relates a circumstance where the *saxum acutum*, or sharp stone, was used about those parts: —

*Ille etiam SAXO corpus laniavit ACUTO,  
 Longaque in immundo pulvere tracta coma est.  
 Voxque fuit, Merui; meritas dem sanguine poenas;  
 Ah! pereant partes quae nocuere mihi;*

*Ah! pereant; dicebat adhuc, onus inguinis aufert;  
Nullaque sunt subito signa relicta viri.*

This quotation is produced in order to prove that a knife made of a sharp stone was used in making incisions and amputations of certain parts of the body, even when the use of iron was well known; but a translation of the verse is not necessary, and would be improper. The

*Mollia qui RAPTA secuit GENITALIA TESTA*

of Juvenal (Sat. vi., ver. 513) is a farther proof of this. Many other proofs might be produced but those who wish for more may consult Calmet and Scheuchzer.

*Circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.* This certainly does not mean that they should repeat circumcision on those who had already received it. This would have been as absurd as impracticable. But the command implies that they were to renew the observance of a rite which had been neglected in their travels in the desert: this is sufficiently evident from the following verses.

**Verse 4.** *This is the cause why Joshua did circumcise* The text here explains itself. Before the Israelites left Egypt all the males were circumcised; and some learned men think that all those who were born during their encampment at Sinai were circumcised also, because there they celebrated the passover; but after that time, during the whole of their stay in the wilderness, there were none circumcised till they entered into the promised land. Owing to their unsettled state, God appears to have dispensed, for the time being, with this rite; but as they were about to celebrate another passover, it was necessary that all the males should be circumcised; for without this they could not be considered within the covenant, and could not keep the passover, which was the seal of that covenant. As baptism is generally understood to have succeeded to circumcision, and the holy eucharist to the passover, hence, in the Church of England, and probably in most others, no person is permitted to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper till he has been baptized.

**Verse 8.** *They abode-in the camp, till they were whole.* This required several days; see the notes on Genesis 34:24, 25. Sir J. Chardin informs us

that when adults were circumcised they were obliged to keep their beds for about three weeks, or at least during that time they are not able to walk about but with great difficulty. The account he had from several renegadoes, who had received circumcision among the Mohammedans. Is it not strange that during this time they were not attacked by the inhabitants of the land, and utterly destroyed, which might have been easily effected? See the case of the poor Shechemites, as related in Genesis 34:24-31, with the notes there. Joshua, as an able general, would at once perceive that this very measure must expose his whole host to the danger of being totally annihilated; but he knew that GOD could not err, and that it was his duty to obey; therefore in the very teeth of his enemies he reduced the major part of his army to a state of total helplessness, simply trusting for protection in the arm of Jehovah! The sequel shows that his confidence was not misplaced; during the whole time God did not permit any of their enemies to disturb them. The path of duty is the path of safety; and it is impossible for any soul to be injured while walking in the path of obedience. But why did not God order them to be circumcised while they were on the east side of Jordan in a state of great security? Because he chose to bring them into straits and difficulties where no counsel or might but his own could infallibly direct and save them; and this he did that they might see that the excellence of the power was of God, and not of man. For the same reason he caused them to pass the Jordan at the time that it overflowed its banks, and not at the time when it was low and easily fordable, that he might have the better opportunity to show them that they were under his immediate care and protection; and convince them of his almighty power, that they might trust in him for ever, and not fear the force of any adversaries. In both cases how apparent are the wisdom, power, and goodness of God!

**Verse 9. *The reproach of Egypt*** Their being uncircumcised made them like the uncircumcised Egyptians; and the Hebrews ever considered all those who were uncircumcised as being in a state of the grossest impurity. Being now circumcised, the reproach of uncircumcision was rolled away. This is another proof that the Israelites did not receive circumcision from the Egyptians; for they could not have considered those in a state of abomination, from whom they received that rite by which they conceived themselves to be made pure. The Israelites had this rite from Abraham; and

Abraham had it from the express order of God himself. See Genesis 17:10, and the note there.

***The place is called Gilgal*** A rolling away or rolling off. See the note on Joshua 4:19, where the word is largely explained.

**Verse 10. *Kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month*** If the ceremony of circumcision was performed on the eleventh day of the month, as many think; and if the sore was at the worst on the thirteenth, and the passover was celebrated on the fourteenth, the people being then quite recovered; it must have been rather a miraculous than a natural healing. We have already seen from the account of Sir J. Chardin, that it required about three weeks to restore to soundness adults who had submitted to circumcision: if any thing like this took place in the case of the Israelites at Gilgal, they could not have celebrated the passover on the third or fourth day after their circumcision. The apparent impossibility of this led Mr. Harmer to suppose that they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month, the preceding time having been employed in the business of the circumcision. See his Observations, vol. iv., p. 427, etc.

**Verse 11. *They did eat of the old corn of the land*** The Hebrew word עֶבֶר *abur*, which we translate old corn, occurs only in this place in such a sense, if that sense be legitimate. The noun, though of doubtful signification, is evidently derived from עָבַר *abar*, to pass over, to go beyond; and here it may be translated simply the produce, that which passes from the land into the hands of the cultivator; or according to Cocceius, what passes from person to person in the way of traffic; hence bought corn, what they purchased from the inhabitants of the land.

***On the morrow after the passover*** That is, on the fifteenth day; for then the feast of unleavened bread began. But they could neither eat bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, till the first-fruits of the harvest had been waved at the tabernacle; (see Leviticus 23:9, etc. ;) and therefore in this case we may suppose that the Israelites had offered a sheaf of the barley-harvest, the only grain that was then ripe, before they ate of the unleavened cakes and parched corn.

**Verse 12. *And the manna ceased-after they had eaten of the old corn***

This miraculous supply continued with them as long as they needed it. While they were in the wilderness they required such a provision; nor could such a multitude, in such a place, be supported without a miracle. Now they are got into the promised land, the anathematized inhabitants of which either fall or flee before them, they find an old stock, and they are brought in just at the commencement of the harvest; hence, as there is an ample provision made in the ordinary way of Providence, there is no longer any need of a miraculous supply; therefore the manna ceased which they had enjoyed for forty years. The circumstances in which it was first given, its continuance with them through all their peregrinations in the wilderness, its accompanying them over Jordan, and ceasing as soon as they got a supply in the ordinary way of Providence, all prove that it was a preternatural gift. "On the fourteenth of Nisan they sacrificed the paschal lamb: on the fifteenth, i.e., according to our calculation, the same day after sunset, they disposed themselves for eating it, and actually did eat it. On the morrow, the sixteenth, after having offered to God the homer, they began eating the corn of the country; and the seventeenth, the manna ceased to fall from heaven. What supports this calculation is, that the homer or sheaf was offered the sixteenth of Nisan, in broad daylight, though pretty late. Now the manna did not fall till night, or very early in the morning; so that it cannot be said to have ceased falling the same day that the Israelites began to eat of the produce of the country." -Dodd.

**Verse 13. *When Joshua was by Jericho*** The sixth chapter should have commenced here, as this is an entirely new relation; or these two chapters should have made but one, as the present division has most unnaturally divided the communication which Joshua had from the angel of the Lord, and which is continued to Joshua 6:5. It is very likely that Joshua had gone out privately to reconnoitre the city of Jericho when he had this vision; and while contemplating the strength of the place, and probably reflecting on the extreme difficulty of reducing it, God, to encourage him, granted him this vision, and instructed him in the means by which the city should be taken.

***There stood a man over against him*** It has been a very general opinion, both among the ancients and moderns, that the person mentioned here was no other than the Lord Jesus in that form which, in the fullness of time, he

was actually to assume for the redemption of man. That the appearance was supernatural is agreed on all hands; and as the name Jehovah is given him, (Joshua 6:2,) and he received from Joshua Divine adoration, we may presume that no created angel is intended.

***And Joshua went unto him*** This is a very natural relation, and carries with it all the appearances and characteristics of a simple relation of fact. The whole history of Joshua shows him to have been a man of the most undaunted mind and intrepid courage—a genuine HERO. An ordinary person, seeing this man armed, with a drawn sword in his hand, would have endeavored to have regained the camp, and sought safety in flight; but Joshua, undismayed though probably slightly armed, walks up to this terrible person and immediately questions him, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? probably at first supposing that he might be the Canaanitish general coming to reconnoitre the Israelitish camp, as himself was come out to examine the city of Jericho.

**Verse 14. *But as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.*** By this saying Joshua was both encouraged and instructed. As if he had said, “Fear not; Jehovah hath sent from heaven to save thee and thy people from the reproach of them that would swallow thee up. Israel is the Lord’s host; and the Lord of hosts is Israel’s Captain. Thou thyself shalt only be captain under me, and I am now about to instruct thee relative to thy conduct in this war.”

***And Joshua-did worship*** Nor was he reprehended for offering Divine worship to this person, which he would not have received had he been a created angel. See Revelation 22:8, 9.

**Verse 15. *Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, etc.*** These were the same words which the angel, on Mount Sinai, spoke to Moses; (see Exodus 3:5-8;) and from this it seems likely that it was the same person that appeared in both places: in the first, to encourage Moses to deliver the oppressed Israelites, and bring them to the promised land; in the second, to encourage Joshua in his arduous labor in expelling the ancient inhabitants, and establishing the people in the inheritance promised to their fathers. THERE is scarcely a more unfortunate division of chapters in the whole Bible than that here. Through this very circumstance many persons have been puzzled to know what was intended by this extraordinary

appearance, because they supposed that the whole business ends with the chapter, whereas, it is continued in the succeeding one, the first verse of which is a mere parenthesis, simply relating the state of Jericho at the time that Joshua was favored by this encouraging vision. We may draw two useful reflections from the subjects of this chapter: — 1. As the manna had now failed, the people always greatly addicted to incredulity, might have been led to imagine that God had now given them up, and would be no longer in their armies, had he not given them this strong assurance, that the Angel of his presence should be with them as the guide and protector of the whole camp; for Joshua undoubtedly informed them of the encouragement he had received from the captain of the Lord's host. 2. By this vision he showed them that their help came from himself, and that it was not by human might or power, but by the Lord of hosts, they were to have the victory over all their adversaries; and he gave them the most convincing proof of this in the miraculous destruction of Jericho. By this means he continued to keep them dependent on his arm alone, without which dependence the spirit of religion could not have been preserved among them.

## CHAPTER 6

*The inhabitants of Jericho close their gates, 1. Continuation of the discourse between the captain of the Lord's host and Joshua. He commands the people to march round the city six days, the seven priests blowing with their trumpets; and to give a general shout, while marching round it on the seventh, and promises that then the walls of the city shall fall down, 2-5. Joshua delivers these directions to the priests and to the people, 6, 7. The priests and people obey; the order of their procession, 8-16. He commands them to spare the house of Rahab, 17, and not to touch any part of the property of the city, the whole of which God had devoted to destruction, 18, 19. On the seventh day the walls fall down, and the Israelites take the city, 20, 21. The spies are ordered to take care of Rahab and her family-the city is burnt, but the silver, gold, brass, and iron, are put into the treasury of the house of the Lord, 22-24. Rahab dwells among the Israelites, 25; and the city is laid under a curse, 26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1. Now Jericho was straitly shut up** The king of Jericho, finding that the spies had escaped, though the city was always kept shut by night, took the most proper precaution to prevent every thing of the kind in future, by keeping the city shut both day and night, having, no doubt, laid in a sufficiency of provisions to stand a siege, being determined to defend himself to the uttermost.

**Verse 2. And the Lord said unto Joshua** This is the same person who in the preceding chapter is called the captain or prince of the Lord's host, the discourse being here continued that was begun at the conclusion of the preceding chapter, from which the first verses of this are unnaturally divided.

**I have given into thine hand Jericho, etc.** From Joshua 24:11, it seems as if there had been persons of all the seven Canaanitish nations then in Jericho, who might have come together at this time to help the king of Jericho against the invading Israelites. The Targum intimates that the place



was very strong, having “gates of iron and bars of brass; and was shut up so closely that none came out, either to combat or make offers of peace.”

**Verse 3. *Ye shall compass the city*** In what order the people marched round the city does not exactly appear from the text. Some think they observed the same order as in their ordinary marches in the desert; (see the note on Numbers 10:14, and see the plans, Numbers 2:2;) others think that the soldiers marched first, then the priests who blew the trumpets, then those who carried the ark, and lastly the people.

**Verse 4. *Seven trumpets of rams’ horns*** The Hebrew word יובלים yobelim does not signify rams’ horns; (see the note on Leviticus 25:11;) nor do any of the ancient versions, the Chaldee excepted, give it this meaning. The instruments used on this occasion were evidently of the same kind with those used on the jubilee, and were probably made of horn or of silver; and the text in this place may be translated, And seven priests shall bear before the ark the seven jubilee trumpets, for they appear to have been the same kind as those used on the jubilee.

***Seven times*** The time was thus lengthened out that the besiegers and the besieged might be the more deeply impressed with that supernatural power by which alone the walls fell.

**Verse 5. *The wall of the city shall fall down flat*** Several commentators, both Jews and Christians, have supposed that the ground under the foundation of the walls opened, and the wall sunk into the chasm, so that there remained nothing but plain ground for the Israelites to walk over. Of this the text says nothing: — ונפלה חומת העיר תחתיה venaphelah chomath hair tachteyha, literally translated, is, The wall of the city shall fall down UNDER ITSELF; which appears to mean no more than, The wall shall fall down FROM ITS VERY FOUNDATIONS. And this probably was the case in every part, though large breaches in different places might be amply sufficient to admit the armed men first, after whom the whole host might enter, in order to destroy the city.

**Verse 9. *The rereward came after the ark*** The word מאספ measseph, from אסף asaph, to collect or gather up, may signify either the rereward, as our translation understands it, or the people who carried the baggage of the army; for on the seventh day this was necessary, as much fighting

might be naturally expected in the assault, and they would need a supply of arms, darts, etc., as well as conveniences for those who might happen to be wounded: or the persons here intended might be such as carried the sacred articles belonging to the ark, or merely such people as might follow in the procession, without observing any particular order. The Jews think the division of Dan is meant, which always brought up the rear. See Numbers 10:25.

**Verse 14. *So they did six days.*** It is not likely that the whole Israelitish host went each day round the city. This would have been utterly impossible: the fighting men alone amounted to nearly 600, 000, independently of the people, who must have amounted at least to two or three millions; we may therefore safely assert that only a select number, such as was deemed necessary for the occasion, were employed. Jericho could not have been a large city: and to reduce it could not have required a hundredth part of the armed force under the command of Joshua.

**Verse 15. *The seventh day-they rose early*** Because on this day they had to encompass the city seven times; a proof that the city could not have been very extensive, else this going round it seven times, and having time sufficient left to sack and destroy it, would have been impossible. It is evident that in the course of these seven days there must have been a Sabbath, and that on this Sabbath the host must have encompassed the city as on the other days: the Jews themselves allow this, and Rab. Deuteronomy Kimchi says “He who had ordained the observance of the Sabbath commanded it to be broken for the destruction of Jericho.” But it does not appear that there could be any breach in the Sabbath by the people simply going round the city, the ark in company, and the priests sounding the sacred trumpets. This was a mere religious procession, performed at the command of God, in which no servile work was done. Therefore Marcion’s objection, that the God of the Hebrews showed a changeableness of disposition in commanding the Sabbath to be kept sacred at one time, and then to be broken at another, is without foundation; for I must contend that no breach took place on this occasion, unless it could be made to appear that the day on which Jericho was taken was the Sabbath which is very unlikely, and which none can prove. But if even this were to be conceded, it is a sufficient answer to all such cavils, that the God who commanded the Sabbath to be set apart for rest and religious

purposes, has always authority to suspend for a season the operation of merely ceremonial laws, or to abrogate them entirely, when the purpose of their institution is fulfilled. The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

**Verse 17. *The city shall be accursed*** That is, it shall be devoted to destruction; ye shall take no spoils, and put all that resist to the sword. Though this may be the meaning of the word **חֶרֶם** *cherem* in some places, see the note on Leviticus 27:29, yet here it seems to imply the total destruction of all the inhabitants, see Joshua 6:21; but it is likely that peace was offered to this city, and that the extermination of the inhabitants was in consequence of the rejection of this offer.

**Verse 19. *But all the silver, and gold—shall come into the treasury*** The Brahmins will receive from any caste, however degraded, gold, silver, etc.: but to receive from Shoodras food, garments, etc., would be considered a great degradation. — Ward.

**Verse 20. *The people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down*** There has been much learned labor spent to prove that the shouting of the people might be the natural cause that the wall fell down! To wait here, either to detail or refute any such arguments, would be lost time: enough of them may be seen in Scheuchzer. The whole relation evidently supposes it to have been a supernatural interference, as the blowing of the trumpets, and the shouting of the people, were too contemptible to be used even as instruments in this work, with the expectation of accomplishing it in a natural way.

**Verse 21. *They utterly destroyed—both man, and woman, etc.*** As this act was ordered by God himself, who is the Maker and Judge of all men, it must be right: for the Judge of all the earth cannot do wrong. Nothing that breathed was permitted to live; hence the oxen, sheep, and asses, were destroyed, as well as the inhabitants.

**Verse 23. *Brought out Rahab, and her father, etc.*** Rahab having been faithful to her vow of secrecy, the Israelites were bound by the oath of the spies, who acted as their representatives in this business, to preserve her and her family alive.

***And left them without the camp*** They were considered as persons unclean, and consequently left without the camp; (see Leviticus 13:46;

Numbers 12:14.) When they had abjured heathenism, were purified, and the males had received circumcision, they were doubtless admitted into the camp, and became incorporated with Israel.

**Verse 24. *Only the silver, and the gold—they put into the treasury, etc.***

The people were to have no share of the spoils, because they had no hand in the conquest. God alone overthrew the city; and into his treasury only the spoils were brought. This is one proof that the agitation of the air, by the sound of the people's voice, was not the cause of the fall of the city walls. Vessels of brass and of iron. — Instead of כֵּלֵי keley, VESSELS, the Septuagint, in the Alexandrian copy, evidently have read כֹּל col, ALL, with the omission of the י yod; for in Joshua 6:19 they translate πᾶς χαλκος και σιδηρος, ALL the brass and iron: but this reading does not appear in any of Kennicott's or Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.

**Verse 25. *And she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day*** This is one proof that the book was written in the time to which it is commonly referred; and certainly might have been done by the hand of Joshua himself, though doubtless many marginal notes may have since crept into the text, which, to superficial observers, give it the appearance of having been written after the days of Joshua. See the preface to this book.

**Verse 26. *And Joshua adjured them at that time*** It appears that he had received intimations from God that this idolatrous city should continue a monument of the Divine displeasure: and having convened the princes and elders of the people, he bound them by an oath that they should never rebuild it; and then, in their presence, pronounced a curse upon the person who should attempt it. The ruins of this city continuing would be a permanent proof, not only of God's displeasure against idolatry, but of the miracle which he had wrought in behalf of the Israelites; and for these reasons God willed that it should not be rebuilt: nevertheless, he left men to the operation of their own free will, and recorded the penalty which those must pay who should disobey him.

***He shall lay the foundation thereof, etc.*** This is a strange execration; but it may rather be considered in the light of a prediction. It seems to intimate that he who should attempt to rebuild this city, should lose all his children in the interim, from laying the foundation to the completion of the walls;

which the author of 1 Kings 16:34 says was accomplished in Hiel the Beth-elite, who rebuilt Jericho under the reign of Ahab, and laid the foundation of it in Abiram, his first-born, and set up its gates in his youngest son Segub: this was 550 years after Joshua pronounced the curse. But we are not sure that this means that the children either died a natural or violent death on this occasion for we may understand the history as relating to the slow progress of the work. Hiel having begun the work at the birth of his first-born, was not able to conclude before the birth of his last child, who was born many years after: and as their names are mentioned, it is very likely that the distance of time between the birth of each was well known when this history was written; and that the extraordinary length of time spent in the work, in which a multitude of vexatious delays had taken place, is that to which the prophetic execration relates. Yet the first opinion is the most probable. We must not suppose that Jericho had been wholly neglected from its overthrow by Joshua to the days of Hiel; if it be the same with the city of palm trees, mentioned Deuteronomy 34:3. We find it mentioned as an inhabited place in the beginning of Judges 1:16, a short time after the death of Joshua: And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees, with the children of Judah, etc.; and this said city (if the same with the city of palm trees) was taken from the Israelites by Eglon king of Moab, Judges 3:13. The ambassadors of David, who were disgracefully treated by Hanun king of the Ammonites, were commanded to tarry at Jericho till their beards should grow, 2 Samuel 10:4, 5. It appears, therefore, that there was a city which went under this name long before the time of Hiel, unless we can suppose that the city of palm trees was a different place from Jericho, or that the name Jericho was given to some part of the circumjacent country after the city was destroyed, which is very probable. After Hiel had rebuilt this city, it became of considerable consequence in the land of Judea: the courses of priests lodged there, who served in their turns at the temple; see Luke 10:30. There was a school of the prophets there, which was visited by Elijah and Elisha, 2 Kings 2:4, 5, 18; and it was at this city that our Lord miraculously healed blind Bartimeus, Mark 10:46; Luke 18:35, etc. At present, Jericho is almost entirely deserted, having but thirty or forty miserable cabins in it, which serve for a place of refuge to some wretched Moors and Arabs, who live there like beasts. The plain of Jericho, formerly so celebrated for its

fertility, is at present uncultivated, producing nothing but a few wild trees, and some very indifferent fruits. See Calmet.

**Verse 27. *So the Lord was with Joshua*** Giving him miraculous assistance in all his enterprises; and this was what he was naturally led to expect from the communication made to him by the captain of the Lord's host, Joshua 5:14, etc. 1. MANY attempts have been made either to deny the miracle in the fall of Jericho, or to account for it on natural causes. Reference has already been made to some of these in the note on Joshua 6:20. But to those who believe the Divine authenticity of the New Testament, every objection of this kind is removed by the authority of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Joshua 11:30: By FAITH the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven days. Hence we find that it was a miraculous interference; and that Joshua's faith in the promise made to him by the captain of the Lord's host, was the instrument which God chose to employ in the accomplishment of this important purpose. 2. The same is said of Rahab: By FAITH the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace, Hebrews 11:31. She believed that the true God was on the side of the Hebrews, and that all opposition to them must be in vain; and this faith led her to put herself under the Divine protection, and in virtue of it she escaped the destruction that fell on her countrymen. Thus God has ever chosen to put honor on faith, as the instrument by which he will perform his greatest miracles of justice and mercy. God, who cannot lie, has given the promise; he that believes shall have it accomplished; for with God nothing shall be impossible, and all things are possible to him that believes. These are Scriptural maxims, and God cannot deny himself. 3. On the curse pronounced by Joshua on those who should rebuild Jericho, it may be necessary to make a few remarks. In ancient history we have many instances of execrations against those who should rebuild those cities which had been destroyed in war, the revival of whose power and influence was dreaded; especially such cities as had been remarkable for oppression, insolence, or perfidy. Strabo observes, lib. xiii., p. 898, ed. 1707, that Agamemnon pronounced execrations on those who should rebuild Troy, as Croesus did against those who should rebuild Sidena, in which the tyrant Glaucias had taken refuge; and this mode of execrating cities, according to Strabo, was an ancient custom-ΕΙΤΕ ΚΑΙ

καταρασαμενου του αγαμεμνονος κατα παλαιον εθος καθαπερ και ο κροισος εξελων την σιδηνην, εις ην ο τυραννος κατεφυγε γλαυκιας, αρως εθετο κατα των τειχιουντων παλιν τον τοπον. The Romans made a decree full of execrations against those who should rebuild Carthage, which had been the rival of their empire; and which, from its advantageous situation, might again become formidable should it be rebuilt. See Zonaras, Anal. The Ionians, according to Isocrates, pronounced the most awful execrations on those who should rebuild the temples destroyed by the Persians, that they might remain to posterity an endless monument of the impiety of those barbarians; and that none might put confidence in a people who were so wicked as to make war on the gods themselves. The other Greeks who had suffered by the Persians acted in the same way, leaving the desolated temples as a public monument of the enmity that should ever subsist between the two nations. See Calmet, and see the notes on Numbers 22:6.

## CHAPTER 7

*The trespass of the Israelites, 1. Joshua sends men to view the state of Ai, 2. They return with a favorable report, 3. Three thousand men are sent against it, who are defeated, and thirty-six killed, 4, 5. Joshua is greatly distressed, prostrates himself, and inquires of the Lord the reason why he has abandoned Israel to their enemies, 6-9. The Lord raises him, and informs him that, contrary to the command, some of the people had secreted some of the spoils of Jericho, 10-12. He is directed how to discover the delinquent, 13-15. Joshua inquires in what TRIBE the guilt is found, and finds it to be in the tribe of Judah; in what FAMILY, and finds it to be among the Zarahites; in what HOUSEHOLD, and finds it to be in that of Zabdi; in what INDIVIDUAL, and finds it to be Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, 16-18. Joshua exhorts him to confess his sin, 19. He does so, and gives a circumstantial account, 20, 21. Joshua sends for the stolen articles, 22, 23. And Achan and all that belonged to him are brought to the valley of Achor, stoned and burnt, 22-26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1. *The children of Israel committed a trespass*** It is certain that one only was guilty; and yet the trespass is imputed here to the whole congregation; and the whole congregation soon suffered shame and disgrace on the account, as their armies were defeated, thirty-six persons slain, and general terror spread through the whole camp. Being one body, God attributes the crime of the individual to the whole till the trespass was discovered, and by a public act of justice inflicted on the culprit the congregation had purged itself of the iniquity. This was done to render every man extremely cautious, and to make the people watchful over each other, that sin might be no where tolerated or connived at, as one transgression might bring down the wrath of God upon the whole camp. See on Joshua 7:12.

***The accursed thing*** A portion of the spoils of the city of Jericho, the whole of which God had commanded to be destroyed.



**For Achan, the son of Carmi, etc.** Judah had two sons by Tamar: Pharez and Zarah. Zarah was father of Zabdi, and Zabdi of Carmi, the father of Achan. These five persons extend through a period of 265 years; and hence Calmet concludes that they could not have had children before they were fifty or fifty-five years of age. This Achan, son of Zabdi, is called, in 1 Chronicles 2:6, Achar, son of Zimrie; but this reading is corrected into Achan by some MSS. in the place above cited.

**Verse 2. Sent men from Jericho to Ai** This is the place called Hai, Genesis 12:8. It was in the east of Beth-el, north of Jericho, from which it was distant about ten or twelve miles. From Joshua 7:4, 5 it appears to have been situated upon a hill, and belonged to the Amorites, as we learn from Joshua 7:7. It is very likely that it was a strong place, as it chose to risk a siege, notwithstanding the extraordinary destruction of Jericho which it had lately witnessed.

**Verse 4. About three thousand men** The spies sent to reconnoitre the place (Joshua 7:3) reported that the town was meanly garrisoned, and that two or three thousand men would be sufficient to take it. These were accordingly sent up, and were repulsed by the Amorites.

**Verse 5. They chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim** They seem to have presumed that the men of Ai would have immediately opened their gates to them, and therefore they marched up with confidence; but the enemy appearing, they were put to flight, their ranks utterly broken, and thirty-six of them killed. שֶׁבָרִים Shebarim signifies breaches or broken places, and may here apply to the ranks of the Israelites, which were broken by the men of Ai; for the people were totally routed, though there were but few slain. They were panic-struck, and fled in the utmost confusion.

**The hearts of the people melted** They were utterly discouraged; and by this gave an ample proof that without the supernatural assistance of God they could never have conquered the land.

**Verse 6. Joshua rent his clothes, etc.** It was not in consequence of this slight discomfiture, simply considered in itself, that Joshua laid this business so much to heart; but 1. Because the people melted, and became as water, and there was little hope that they would make any stand against

the enemy; and 2. Because this defeat evidently showed that God had turned his hand against them. Had it not been so, their enemies could not have prevailed.

*Put dust upon their heads.* Rending the clothes, beating the breast, tearing the hair, putting dust upon the head, and falling down prostrate, were the usual marks of deep affliction and distress. Most nations have expressed their sorrow in a similar way. The example of the distressed family of King Latinus, so affectingly related by Virgil, may be adduced in illustration of many passages in the history of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, etc.

*Regina ut testis venientem prospicit hostem —  
Purpureos moritura manu discindit amictus —  
Filia prima manu flavos Lavinia crines,  
Et roseas laniata genas. —  
It scissa veste Latinus —  
Canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans.*

*Æn. lib. xii., ver. 594.*

*“The queen, who saw the foes invade the town,  
And brands on tops of burning houses thrown,  
She raves against the gods, she beats her breast,  
And tears, with both her hands, her purple vest.  
The sad Lavinia rends her yellow hair,  
And rosy cheeks; the rest her sorrow share.  
Latinus tears his garments as he goes,  
Both for his public and his private woes;  
With filth his venerable beard besmears,  
And sordid dust deforms his silver hairs.”*

*DRYDEN.*

**Verse 7. *Alas, O Lord God*** Particles of exclamations and distress, or what are called interjections, are nearly the same in all languages: and the reason is because they are the simple voice of nature. The Hebrew word which we translate alas is אַהֵם ahah. The complaint of Joshua in this and the following verses seems principally to have arisen from his deep concern

for the glory of God, and the affecting interest he took in behalf of the people: he felt for the thousands of Israel, whom he considered as abandoned to destruction: and he felt for the glory of God, for he knew should Israel be destroyed God's name would be blasphemed among the heathen; and his expostulations with his Maker, which have been too hastily blamed by some, as savouring of too great freedom and impatience are founded on God's own words, Deuteronomy 32:26, 27, and on the practice of Moses himself, who had used similar expressions on a similar occasion; see Exodus 5:22, 23; Numbers 14:13-18.

**Verse 10. *Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?*** It is plain there was nothing in Joshua's prayer or complaint that was offensive to God, for here there is no reprehension: Why liest thou thus? this is no time for complaint; something else is indispensably necessary to be done.

**Verse 11. *Israel hath sinned*** It is impossible that God should turn against his people, if they had not turned away from him. They have taken of the accursed thing, notwithstanding my severe prohibition. They have also stolen, supposing, if not seen by their brethren, I should either not see or not regard it. They have dissembled-pretended to have kept strictly the command I gave them; and have put it among their own stuff-considered it now as a part of their own property.

**Verse 12. *Because they were accursed*** From this verse it appears that the nature of the execration or anathema was such, that those who took of the thing doomed to destruction fell immediately under the same condemnation. The inhabitants of Jericho and all that they had were accursed: therefore they and all their substance were to be destroyed. The Israelites took of the accursed thing, and therefore became accursed with it. This was certainly understood when the curse was pronounced: Every man who touches this property shall be involved in the same execration. Achan therefore was sufficiently aware of the risk he ran in taking any part of the anathematized thing; and when viewed in this light, the punishment inflicted on him will appear to be perfectly just and proper.

**Verse 13. *Up, sanctify the people*** Joshua, all the time that God spake, lay prostrate before the ark: he is now commanded to get up, and sanctify the people, i.e., cause them to wash themselves, and get into a proper

disposition to hear the judgment of the Lord relative to the late transactions.

**Verse 14. *Ye shall be brought according to your tribes*** It has been a subject of serious inquiry in what manner and by what means the culpable tribe, family, household, and individual, were discovered. The Jews have many conceits on the subject; the most rational is, that the tribes being, in their representatives, brought before the high priest, the stone on the breastplate gave immediate intimation by suddenly losing its lustre. According to them, this is what is termed consulting God by Urim and Thummim. It is however most probable that the whole was determined by the lot; and that God chose this method to detect the guilty tribe, next the family, thirdly the household, and lastly the individual. This was nearly the plan pursued in the election of Saul by Samuel. “Now therefore,” says he, “present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken,” 1 Samuel 10:19, 20. If the lot was used in the one case it was doubtless used in the other also, as the procedure in the main was entirely similar. The same mode was used to find out who it was that transgressed the king’s command, when it was found that Jonathan had eaten a little honey, 1 Samuel 14:40-43. It is well known that the promised land was divided by lot among the Israelites; (see Numbers 26:55; 33:54; Deuteronomy 1:38, &.;) and that the courses of the priests were regulated by lot in the days of David, 1 Chronicles 24:5, etc. That this was a frequent mode of determining difficult questions, and appointed by God himself, is evident from Leviticus 16:8; Psalm 51:18; Proverbs 16:33; 18:18; Acts 1:26.

**Verse 17. *And he brought the family of Judah*** Dr. Kennicott observes, “All Israel came near by TRIBES, and one tribe was fixed on; then that tribe came by its FAMILIES, and one family was fixed on; then came that family by its HOUSEHOLDS, and one household was fixed on, and then that household, coming MAN by MAN, one man was fixed on. Yet according to the present text, in the execution of this command, all Israel came, and the tribe of Judah was fixed on; secondly came the families of Judah, and the family of the Zarhites was fixed on; thirdly came the family of the Zarhites

MAN by MAN, and Zabdi was fixed on; and fourthly came the household of Zabdi MAN by MAN, and Achan was fixed on. So that in the third article the word for by households is most certainly left out; and the fourth article, man by man, is improperly expressed twice. Instead of לגברים laggebarim, MAN by MAN, in Joshua 7:17, the true word לבתימ labbottim, by HOUSEHOLDS, is preserved in six Hebrew copies, and the Syriac version. By this method was discovered Achan, as he is here five times called, though the valley in which he was stoned is called Achor. He is also called Achar in the text, and in all the versions, in 1 Chronicles 2:7. He is called Achar in the five places of Joshua in the Syrian version; also in all five in the Greek of the Vatican MS., and twice in the Alexandrian MS., and so in Josephus.” -Kennicott’s Observat.

**Verse 19. My son, give-glory to the Lord God** The person being now detected, Joshua wishes him to acknowledge the omniscience of God, and confess his crime. And doubtless this was designed, not only for the edification of the people, and a vindication of the righteous judgment of God, but in reference to his own salvation; for as his life was now become forfeited to the law, there was the utmost necessity of humiliation before God that his soul might be saved. Give glory to God signifies the same as, Make a thorough confession as in the presence of God, and disguise no part of the truth. In this way and in these very words the Jews adjured the man who had been born blind that he would truly tell who had healed him; for they pretended to believe that Christ was such a sinner that God would not work a miracle by him. John 9:24.

**Verse 20. I have sinned against the Lord God** This seems a very honest and hearty confession, and there is hope that this poor culprit escaped perdition.

**Verse 21. A goodly Babylonish garment** אדרת שנער addereth shinar, a splendid or costly robe of Shinar; but as Babylon or Babel was built in the plain of Shinar, the word has in general been translated Babylon in this place. It is very probable that this was the robe of the king of Jericho, for the same word is used, Jon 3:6, to express the royal robe, of the king of Nineveh which he laid aside in order to humble himself before God. Bochart and Calmet have shown at large that Babylonish robes were very splendid, and in high reputation. “They are,” says Calmet, “generally

allowed to have been of various colors, though some suppose they were woven thus; others, that they were embroidered with the needle; and others, that they were painted. SILIUS ITALICUS appears to think they were woven thus: —

*Vestis spirantes referens subtemine vultus,  
Quos radio caelat BABYLON.*

*Punic. lib. xiv., ver. 667.*

MARTIAL seems to say they were embroidered with the needle: —

*Non ego praetulerim BABYLONIA PICTA superbe  
Textra, Semiramia quae variantur ACU.*

*Lib. viii., E. 28, ver. 17.*

PLINY (lib. viii., c. 48) and APULEIUS (Florid. lib. i.) speak of them as if painted: “Colores diversos picturae intexere Babylon maxime celebravit, et nomen imposuit.” Thus far Calmet: but it may be observed that the clothes woven of divers colors at Babylon, which were so greatly celebrated, and hence called Babylonish garments, appear rather to have had the pictures woven or embroidered in them than painted on them, as Calmet supposes, though it is most likely the figures referred to were the work of the needle after the cloth came from the loom. AQUILA translates the original, שֵׁנֶר אֲדָרָא addereth shinar, by *στολην βαβυλωνικην*, a Babylonish robe; SYMMACHUS, *ενδυμα συναρ*, a robe of Synar; the SEPTUAGINT, *ψιλην ποικιλην*, a fine garment of different colors; and the VULGATE, pallium coccineum, a scarlet cloak. There is no doubt it was both beautiful and costly, and on these grounds it was coveted by Achan.

*Two hundred shekels of silver* At three shillings per shekel, amount to about 30œ. sterling.

*A wedge of gold* A tongue of gold, *לשו זהב* leshon zahab what we commonly call an ingot of gold, a corruption of the word lingot, signifying a little tongue, of fifty shekels weight. These fifty shekels, in weight 29 oz. 15 15/31 gr., at 2œ. 5s. 2« 42/93d. per shekel, would be worth about

113æ. Os. 10 3/4d. This verse gives us a notable instance of the progress of sin. It 1. enters by the eye; 2. sinks into the heart; 3. actuates the hand; and, 4. leads to secrecy and dissimulation. I saw, etc, I coveted, etc. I took and hid them in the earth. Thus says St. James: “When lust (evil desire) is conceived it bringeth forth sin; and when sin is finished it bringeth forth death,” Joshua 1:15.

**Verse 24. *Joshua-took Achan-and all that he had*** He and his cattle and substance were brought to the valley to be consumed; his sons and his daughters, probably, to witness the judgments of God inflicted on their disobedient parent. See Joshua 7:25.

**Verse 25. *Why hast thou troubled us?*** Here is a reference to the meaning of Achan’s or Achar’s name, **מה עכרתנו** meh ACHAR-tanu; and as **עכר** achar is used here, and not **עכ** achan, and the valley is called the valley of Achor, and not the valley of Achan, hence some have supposed that Achar was his proper name, as it is read 1 Chronicles 2:7, and in some MSS., and ancient versions. See the note on Joshua 7:17.

***And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.*** With great deference to the judgment of others, I ask, Can it be fairly proved from the text that the sons and daughters of Achan were stoned to death and burnt as well as their father? The text certainly leaves it doubtful, but seems rather to intimate that Achan alone was stoned, and that his substance was burnt with fire. The reading of the present HEBREW text is, They stoned HIM with stones, and burnt THEM with fire, after they had stoned THEM with stones. The singular number being used in the first clause of the verse, and the plural in the last, leaves the matter doubtful. The VULGATE is very clear:

Lapidavitque EUM omnis Israel; et cuncta quae illius erant, igne consumpta sunt, “All Israel stoned him; and all that he had was consumed with fire.”

The SEPTUAGINT add this and the first clause of the next verse together:

**και ελιθοβολησαν αυτον λιθοις πας ισραηλ, και επεστησαν αυτω σωρον λιθων μεγαν:** And all Israel stoned HIM with stones, and raised over HIM a great heap of stones. The Syriac says simply, They stoned HIM with stones, and burned what pertained to HIM with fire. The TARGUM is the same as the Hebrew. The ANGLO-SAXON seems to refer the whole to Achan and his GOODS: [AS] And HIM they stoned there, and

burnt his goods. The ARABIC version alone says, They stoned HIM and his CHILDREN, and his goods, [A]. Instead of burnt THEM, אָתָם otham, two of Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS. read אָתָו otho, HIM; which reading, if genuine, would make the different members of the verse agree better. It is possible that Achan, his oxen, asses, sheep, tent, and all his household goods, were destroyed, but his sons and daughters left uninjured. But it may be asked, Why are they brought out into the valley with the rest? Why, that they might see and fear, and be for ever deterred by their father's punishment from imitating his example. I have gone thus far into this important transaction, in which the justice and mercy of God are so much concerned, that I might be able to assign to each its due. That Achan's life was forfeited to justice by his transgression, no one doubts: he sinned against a known and positive law. His children could not suffer with him, because of the law, Deuteronomy 24:16, unless they had been accomplices in his guilt: of this there is no evidence; and the text in question, which speaks of Achan's punishment, is extremely dubious, as far as it relates to this point. One circumstance that strengthens the supposition that the children were not included, is the command of the Lord, Joshua 7:15: "HE that is taken with the accursed thing, shall be burnt with fire; he, and all that he hath." Now, all that he hath may certainly refer to his goods, and not to his children; and his punishment, and the destruction of his property would answer every purpose of public justice, both as a punishment and preventive of the crime; and both mercy and justice require that the innocent shall not suffer with the guilty, unless in very extraordinary cases, where God may permit the righteous or the innocent to be involved in those public calamities by which the ungodly are swept away from the face of the earth: but in the case before us, no necessity of this kind urged it, and therefore I conclude that Achan alone suffered, and that his repentance and confession were genuine and sincere; and that, while JUSTICE required his life, MERCY was extended to the salvation of his soul.

**Verse 26. They raised over him a great heap of stones** The burial-places, both of heroes and eminent culprits, were anciently thus distinguished; and transactions of this kind gave rise to those great piles of stones called cairns, that are so frequently to be met with, especially in northern countries. FROM the whole of this account we may see the exceeding



sinfulness of sin, and the great danger of not withstanding its first approaches. By covetousness many lives and many souls have been destroyed, and yet the living lay it not to heart! Who fears the love of money, provided he can get riches? Through the intensity of this desire, every part of the surface of the earth, and as far as possible its bowels, are ransacked in order to get wealth; and God alone can tell, who sees all things, to how many private crimes, frauds, and dissimulations, this gives birth; by which the wrath of God is brought down upon the community at large! Who is an enemy to his country? The sinner against his God. An open foe may be resisted and repelled, because he is known; but the covetous man, who, as far as his personal safety will admit, is outraging all the requisitions of justice, is an unseen pestilence, sowing the seeds of desolation and ruin in society. Achan's covetousness, which led him to break the law of God, had nearly proved the destruction of the Israelitish camp, nor would the Lord turn away from his displeasure till the evil was detected, and the criminal punished. Reader, is the face of God turned against thee, because of some private transgression? Are not thy circumstances and family suffering in consequence of something in thy private life? O search and try thy ways, return to God, and humble thyself before him lest thy iniquity instantly find thee out.

## CHAPTER 8

*The Lord encourages Joshua, and promises to deliver Ai into his hands, and instructs him how he is to proceed against it, 1, 2. Joshua takes thirty thousand of his best troops, and gives them instructions concerning his intention of taking Ai by stratagem, 3-8. The men dispose themselves according to these directions, 9-13. The king of Ai attacks the Israelites, who, feigning to be beaten, fly before him, in consequence of which all the troops of Ai issue out, and pursue the Israelites, 14-17. Joshua, at the command of God, stretches out his spear towards Ai, and then five thousand men that he had placed in ambush in the valley rise up, enter the city, and set it on fire, 18, 19. Then Joshua and his men turned against the men of Ai, and, at the same time, those who had taken the city sallied forth and attacked them in the rear; thus the men of Ai were defeated, their king taken prisoner, the city sacked, and twelve thousand persons slain, 20-26. The Israelites take the spoils, and hang the king of Ai, 27-29. Joshua builds an altar to God on Mount Ebal, and writes on it a copy of the law of Moses, 30-32. The elders, officers, and judges, stand on each side of the ark, one half over against Mount Gerizim, and the other against Mount Ebal, and read all the blessings and curses of the law, according to the command of Moses, 33-35.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. *Fear not*** The iniquity being now purged away, because of which God had turned his hand against Israel, there was now no cause to dread any other disaster, and therefore Joshua is ordered to take courage.

***Take all the people of war with thee*** From the letter of this verse it appears that all that were capable of carrying arms were to march out of the camp on this occasion: thirty thousand chosen men formed an ambuscade in one place; five thousand he placed in another, who had all gained their positions in the night season: with the rest of the army he appeared the next morning before Ai, which the men of that city would naturally suppose were the whole of the Israelitish forces; and

consequently be the more emboldened to come out and attack them. But some think that thirty thousand men were the whole that were employed on this occasion; five thousand of whom were placed as an ambuscade on the west side of the city between Beth-el and Ai, Joshua 8:12, and with the rest he appeared before the city in the morning. The king of Ai seeing but about twenty-five thousand coming against him, and being determined to defend his city and crown to the last extremity, though he had but twelve thousand persons in the whole city, Joshua 8:25, scarcely one half of whom we can suppose to be effective men, he was determined to risk a battle; and accordingly issued out, and was defeated by the stratagem mentioned in the preceding part of this chapter. Several eminent commentators are of opinion that the whole Israelitish force was employed on this occasion, because of what is said in the first verse; but this is not at all likely. 1. It appears that but thirty thousand were chosen out of the whole camp for this expedition, the rest being drawn up in readiness should their co-operation be necessary. See Joshua 8:3, 10. 2. That all the people were mustered in order to make this selection, Joshua 8:1. 3. That these thirty thousand were sent off by night, Joshua 8:3, Joshua himself continuing in the camp a part of that night, Joshua 8:9, with the design of putting himself at the head of the army next morning. 4. That of the thirty thousand men five thousand were directed to lie in ambush between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of the city, Joshua 8:12; the twenty-five thousand having taken a position on the north side of the city, Joshua 8:11. 5. That the whole of the troops employed against Ai on this occasion were those on the north and west, Joshua 8:13, which we know from the preceding verses were composed of thirty thousand chosen men. 6. That Joshua went in the course of the night, probably before daybreak, into the valley between Beth-el and Ai, where the ambuscade of five thousand men was placed, Joshua 8:13, and gave them the proper directions how they were to proceed, and agreed on the sign he was to give them at the moment he wished them to act, see Joshua 8:18: and that, after having done so, he put himself at the head of the twenty-five thousand men on the north side of the city: for we find him among them when the men of Ai issued out, Joshua 8:15, though he was the night before in the valley on the west side, where the ambuscade lay, Joshua 8:13. 7. That as Ai was but a small city, containing only twelve thousand inhabitants, it would have been absurd to have employed an army of several hundred thousand men against them. 8.

This is confirmed by the opinion of the spies, Joshua 7:3, who, from the smallness of the place, the fewness of its inhabitants, and the panic-struck state in which they found them, judged that three thousand troops would be quite sufficient to reduce the place. 9. That it appears this judgment was correctly enough formed, as the whole population of the place amounted only to twelve thousand persons, as we have already seen, Joshua 8:25. 10. That even a less force might have been sufficient for the reduction of this place, had they been supplied with battering-rams, and such like instruments, which it does not appear the Israelites possessed. 11. That this is the reason why Joshua employed the stratagems detailed in this chapter: having no proper instruments or machines by means of which he might hope to take the city by assault, (and to reduce it by famine, which was quite possible, would have consumed too much time,) he used the feigned flight, Joshua 8:19, to draw the inhabitants from the city, that the ambush, Joshua 8:12, 15, might then enter, and take possession of it. 12. That had he advanced with a greater force against the city the inhabitants would have had no confidence in risking a battle, and consequently would have kept within their walls, which would have defeated the design of the Israelites, which was to get them to issue from their city. 13. That, all these circumstances considered thirty thousand men, disposed as above, were amply sufficient for the reduction of the city, and were the whole of the Israelitish troops which were employed on the occasion.

**Verse 8. *Ye shall set the city on fire*** Probably this means no more than that they should kindle a fire in the city, the smoke of which should be an indication that they had taken it. For as the spoils of the city were to be divided among the people, had they at this time set fire to the city itself, all the property must have been consumed, for the five thousand men did not wait to save any thing, as they immediately issued out to attack the men of Ai in the rear.

**Verse 10. *Numbered the people*** וַיִּפְקֹד אֶת הָעָם vaiyiphkod eth haam, he visited the people-inspected their ranks to see whether every thing was in perfect readiness, that in case they should be needed they might be led on to the attack. There is no doubt that Joshua had left the rest of the army so disposed and ready, part of it having probably advanced towards Ai, that he might easily receive reinforcements in case of any disaster to

the thirty thousand which had advanced against the city; and this consideration will serve to remove a part of the difficulty which arises from Joshua 8:1, 3, 10, collated with other parts of this chapter. Had he brought all his troops in sight, the people of Ai would not have attempted to risk a battle, and would consequently have kept within their walls, from which it was the object of Joshua to decoy them. See the preceding observations, particularly 10, 11, and 12.

**Verse 17. *There was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el*** It is very likely that the principal strength of Beth-el had been previously brought into Ai, as the strongest place to make a stand in; Beth-el being but about three miles distant from Ai, and probably not greatly fortified. Therefore Ai contained on this occasion all the men of Beth-el—all the warriors of that city, as well as its own troops and inhabitants. Others think that the Beth-elites, seeing the Israelites fly, sallied out of their city as against a common enemy; but that, finding the men of Ai discomfited, and the city taken, they returned to Beth-el, which Joshua did not think proper to attack at this time. From Judges 1:24 we find that Beth-el was then a walled city, in the hands of the Canaanites, and was taken by the house of Joseph.

**Verse 18. *Stretch out the spear*** It is very probable that Joshua had a flag or ensign at the end of his spear, which might be easily seen at a considerable distance; and that the unfurling or waving of this was the sign agreed on between him and the ambush. (see Joshua 8:13, and the preceding observations on Joshua 8:1, observation 6;) and on seeing this flag or ensign unfurled, the men who lay in ambush arose and entered the city, making the fire previously agreed on. See Joshua 8:8.

**Verse 19. *Set the city on fire.*** See on Joshua 8:8.

**Verse 20. *They had no power to flee this way or that way*** They were in utter consternation; they saw that the city was taken, they found themselves in the midst of their foes; that their wives, children, and property, had fallen a prey to their enemies, in consequence of which they were so utterly panic-struck as to be incapable of making any resistance.

**Verse 24. *Returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword.*** This must refer to the women, children, and old persons, left behind; for it

is likely that all the effective men had sallied out when they imagined the Israelites had fled. See Joshua 8:16.

**Verse 26. *Joshua drew not his hand back*** He was not only the general, but the standard-bearer or ensign of his own army, and continued in this employment during the whole of the battle. See on Joshua 8:18. Some commentators understand this and Joshua 8:18 figuratively, as if they implied that Joshua continued in prayer to God for the success of his troops; nor did he cease till the armies of Ai were annihilated, and the city taken and destroyed. The Hebrew word כִּידֹן *kidon*, which we render spear, is rendered by the Vulgate clypeum, buckler; and it must be owned that it seems to have this signification in several passages of Scripture: (see 1 Samuel 17:6, 45; Job 39:23;) but it is clear enough also that it means a spear, or some kind of offensive armor, in other places: see Job 41:29; Jeremiah 6:23. I cannot therefore think that it has any metaphorical meaning, such as that attributed to the holding up of Moses's hands, Exodus 17:10-12, which is generally allowed to have a spiritual meaning, though it might be understood as the act of Joshua is here; and to this meaning an indirect glance is given in the note on the above place. But however the place in Exodus may be understood, that before us does not appear to have any metaphorical or equivocal meaning; Joshua continued to hold up or stretch out his spear, and did not slack from the pursuit till the forces of Ai were utterly discomfited.

**Verse 27. *Only the cattle and the spoil*** In the case of Jericho these were all consigned to destruction, and therefore it was criminal to take any thing pertaining to the city, as we have already seen; but in the case before us the cattle and spoils were expressly given to the conquerors by the order of God. See Joshua 8:2.

**Verse 28. *Unto this day.*** This last clause was probably added by a later hand.

**Verse 29. *The king of Ai he hanged on a tree*** He had gone out at the head of his men, and had been taken prisoner, Joshua 8:23; and the battle being over, he was ordered to be hanged, probably after having been strangled, or in some way deprived of life, as in the case mentioned Joshua 10:26, for in those times it was not customary to hang people alive.

**As soon as the sun was down** It was not lawful to let the bodies remain all night upon the tree. See the note on Deuteronomy 21:23. The Septuagint say the king of Ai was hanged *επι ξυλον διδυμον*, upon a double tree, which probably means a forked tree, or something in the form of a cross. The tree on which criminals were hanged among the Romans was called *arbor infelix*, and *lignum infelix*, the unfortunate, ill-fated, or accursed tree.

**Raise thereon a great heap of stones** This was a common custom through all antiquity in every country, as we have already seen in the case of Achan, Joshua 7:20.

**Verse 30. Then Joshua built an altar** This was done in obedience to the express command of God, Deuteronomy 27:4-8. See the notes there.

**Verse 32. A copy of the law of Moses** *משנה תורה* *mishneh torath*, the repetition of the law; that is, a copy of the blessings and curses, as commanded by Moses; not a copy of the Decalogue, as some imagine, nor of the book of Deuteronomy, as others think; much less of the whole Pentateuch; but merely of that part which contained the blessings and curses, and which was to be read on this solemn occasion. See the note on Deuteronomy 27:3.

**Verse 33. Half of them over against Mount Gerizim** See the arrangement of the whole of this business in the note and observations on Deuteronomy 27:26. And see also the notes on Deuteronomy 28:1-68.

**Verse 35. With the women and the little ones** It was necessary that all should know that they were under the same obligations to obey; even the women are brought forward, not only because of their personal responsibility, but because to them was principally intrusted the education of the children. The children also witness this solemn transaction, that a salutary fear of offending God might be early, diligently, and deeply impressed upon their hearts. Thus every precaution is taken to ensure obedience to the Divine precepts, and consequently to promote the happiness of the people; for this every ordinance of God is remarkable, as he ever causes the interest and duty of his followers to go hand in hand. 1. IT may be asked, Seeing God promised to deliver Ai into the hands of the Israelites, why needed they to employ so many men and so many stratagems in order to its reduction? To this it may be answered, that God

will have man to put forth the wisdom and power with which he has endued him, in every important purpose of life; that he endued him with those powers for this very end; and that it would be inconsistent with his gracious design so to help man at any time as to render the powers he had given him useless. 2. It is only in the use of lawful means that we have any reason to expect God's blessing and help. One of the ancients has remarked, "Though God has made man without himself he will not save him without himself;" and therefore man's own concurrence of will, and co-operation of power with God, are essentially necessary to his preservation and salvation. This co-operation is the grand condition, sine qua non, on which God will help or save. But is not this "endeavoring to merit salvation by our own works?" No: for this is impossible, unless we could prove that all the mental and corporeal powers which we possess came from and are of ourselves, and that we held them independently of the power and beneficence of our Creator, and that every act of these was of infinite value, to make it an equivalent for the heaven we wished to purchase. Putting forth the hand to receive the alms of a benevolent man, can never be considered a purchase-price for the bounty bestowed. For ever shall that word stand true in all its parts, Christ is the AUTHOR of eternal salvation to all them that OBEY him, Hebrews 5:9.



## CHAPTER 9

*All the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, unite their forces against Joshua, 1, 2. The inhabitants of Gibeon, hearing what Joshua had done to Ai, sent ambassadors to him, feigning themselves to come from a very distant tribe, requesting a friendly alliance with him, 3-5. Their address to Joshua, and the means they used to deceive the Israelites, 6-13. The Israelitish elders are deceived, and make a league with them, which they confirm with an oath, 14, 15. After three days they are informed that the Gibeonites belong to the seven Canaanitish nations, yet they spare their cities, 16, 17. The congregation murmuring because of this, the elders excuse themselves because of their oath, 18, 19. They purpose to make the Gibeonites slaves to the congregation, 20, 21. Joshua calls them, and pronounces this sentence against them, 22, 23. They vindicate themselves, and submit to their lot, 24, 25. They are spared, and made hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation and to the altar, 26, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1.** *And it came to pass, when all the kings-heard thereof* From this account it appears that the capture and destruction of Jericho and Ai had been heard of to the remotest parts of the land, that a general fear of the Israelitish arms prevailed, and that the different dynasties or petty governments into which the land was divided, felt all their interests at stake, and determined to make the defense of their country a common cause. This was the most prudent step they could take in their circumstances, and therefore they entered into a confederation in order to arrest the progress of the Israelites. The Great Sea mentioned here is the Mediterranean Sea, the coasts of which were inhabited by the Phoenicians, Syrians, Sidonians, and Philistines. It is very likely that all these united with the Canaanites for their common safety.

**Verse 3. *The inhabitants of Gibeon heard*** These alone did not join the confederation. Gibeon is supposed to have been the capital of the Hivites. In the division of the land it fell to the lot of Benjamin, Joshua 18:25, and was afterwards given to the priests, Joshua 21:17. See the note on Joshua 10:2.

**Verse 4. *They did work wilily*** Finesse of this kind is allowed by the conduct of all nations; and stratagems in war are all considered as legal. Nine tenths of the victories gained are attributable to stratagem; all sides practice them, and therefore none can condemn them. Much time and labor have been lost in the inquiry, “Did not the Gibeonites tell lies?” Certainly they did, and what is that to us? Does the word of God commend them for it? It does not. Are they held up to us as examples! Surely no. They did what any other nation would have done in their circumstances, and we have nothing to do with their example. Had they come to the Israelites, and simply submitted themselves without opposition and without fraud, they had certainly fared much better. Lying and hypocrisy always defeat their own purpose, and at best can succeed only for a short season. Truth and honesty never wear out.

***Old sacks-and wine bottles, old, etc.*** They pretended to have come from a very distant country, and that their sacks and the goat-skins that served them for carrying their wine and water in, were worn out by the length of the journey.

**Verse 5. *Old shoes and clouted*** Their sandals, they pretended had been worn out by long and difficult travelling, and they had been obliged to have them frequently patched during the way; their garments also were worn thin; and what remained of their bread was mouldy-spotted with age, or, as our old version has it, bored-pierced with many holes by the vermin which had bred in it, through the length of the time it had been in their sacks; and this is the most literal meaning of the original נִקְדִּים nikkudim, which means spotted or pierced with many holes. The old and clouted shoes have been a subject of some controversy: the Hebrew word בָּלוֹת baloth signifies worn out, from בָּלָה balah, to wear away; and מַטְלָאוֹת metullaoth, from מָלָא tala, to spot or patch, i.e., spotted with patches. Our word clouted, in the Anglo-Saxon [A.S.] signifies seamed up, patched; from [A.S.] clout, rag, or small piece of cloth, used for piecing or patching.

But some suppose the word here comes from clouet, the diminutive of clou, a small nail, with which the Gibeonites had fortified the soles of their shoes, to prevent them from wearing out in so long a journey; but this seems very unlikely; and our old English term clouted-seamed or patched-expresses the spirit of the Hebrew word.

**Verse 6. *Make ye a league with us.*** כרתצ לנו ברית kirethu lanu berith, cut, or divide, the covenant sacrifice with us. From this it appears that heathenism at this time had its sacrifices, and covenants were ratified by sacrificing to and invoking the objects of their adoration.

**Verse 7. *Peradventure ye dwell among us*** It is strange they should have had such a suspicion, as the Gibeonites had acted so artfully; and it is as strange that, having such a suspicion, they acted with so little caution.

**Verse 8. *We are thy servants.*** This appears to have been the only answer they gave to the question of the Israelitish elders, and this they gave to Joshua, not to them, as they saw that Joshua was commander-in-chief of the host.

***Who are ye? and from whence come ye?*** To these questions, from such an authority, they felt themselves obliged to give an explicit answer; and they do it very artfully by a mixture of truth, falsehood, and hypocrisy.

**Verse 9. *Because of the name of the Lord thy God*** They pretend that they had undertaken this journey on a religious account; and seem to intimate that they had the highest respect for Jehovah, the object of the Israelites' worship; this was hypocrisy.

***We have heard the fame of him*** This was true: the wonders which God did in Egypt, and the discomfiture of Sihon and Og, had reached the whole land of Canaan, and it was on this account that the inhabitants of it were panic-struck. The Gibeonites, knowing that they could not stand where such mighty forces had fallen, wished to make the Israelites their friends. This part of their relation was strictly true.

**Verse 11. *Wherefore our elders, etc.*** All this, and what follows to the end of verse 13, was false, contrived merely for the purpose of deceiving the Israelites, and this they did to save their own lives; as they expected all the inhabitants of Canaan to be put to the sword.

**Verse 14. *The men took of their victuals*** This was done in all probability in the way of friendship; for, from time immemorial to the present day, eating together, in the Asiatic countries, is considered a token of unalterable friendship; and those who eat even salt together, feel themselves bound thereby in a perpetual covenant. But the marginal reading of this clause should not be hastily rejected.

***And asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.*** They made the covenant with the Gibeonites without consulting God by Urim and Thummim, which was highly reprehensible in them, as it was a state transaction in which the interests and honor of God their king were intimately concerned.

**Verse 15. *Joshua made peace with them*** Joshua agreed to receive them into a friendly connection with the Israelites, and to respect their lives and properties; and the elders of Israel bound themselves to the observance of it, and confirmed it with an oath. As the same words are used here as in Joshua 9:6, we may suppose that the covenant was made in the ordinary way, a sacrifice being offered on the occasion, and its blood poured out before the Lord. See on Genesis 15:10, etc.

**Verse 16. *At the end of three days*** Gibeon is reputed to be only about eight leagues distant from Gilgal, and on this account the fraud might be easily discovered in the time mentioned above.

**Verse 17. *The children of Israel-came unto their cities*** Probably when the fraud was discovered, Joshua sent out a detachment to examine their country, and to see what use could be made of it in the prosecution of their war with the Canaanites. Some of the cities mentioned here were afterwards in great repute among the Israelites: and God chose to make one of them, Kirjath-jearim, the residence of the ark of the covenant for twenty years, in the reigns of Saul and David. There is no evidence that the preservation of the Gibeonites was displeasing to Jehovah.

**Verse 18. *All the congregation murmured*** Merely because they were deprived of the spoils of the Gibeonites. They had now got under the full influence of a predatory spirit; God saw their proneness to this, and therefore, at particular times, totally interdicted the spoils of conquered cities, as in the case of Jericho.

**Verse 19. *We have sworn unto them*** Although the Israelites were deceived in this business, and the covenant was made on a certain supposition which was afterwards proved to have had no foundation in truth, and consequently the whole engagement on the part of the deceived was hereby vitiated and rendered null and void; yet, because the elders had eaten with them, offered a covenant sacrifice, and sworn by Jehovah, they did not consider themselves at liberty to break the terms of the agreement, as far as the lives of the Gibeonites were concerned. That their conduct in this respect was highly pleasing to God is evident from this, that Joshua is nowhere reprehended for making this covenant, and sparing the Gibeonites; and that Saul, who four hundred years after this thought himself and the Israelites loosed from this obligation, and in consequence oppressed and destroyed the Gibeonites, was punished for the breach of this treaty, being considered as the violator of a most solemn oath and covenant engagement. See 2 Samuel 21:2-9, and Ezekiel 17:18, 19. All these circumstances laid together, prove that the command to destroy the Canaanites was not so absolute as is generally supposed: and should be understood as rather referring to the destruction of the political existence of the Canaanitish nations, than to the destruction of their lives. See the notes on Deuteronomy 20:10, 17.

**Verse 21. *Hewers of wood and drawers of water*** Perhaps this is a sort of proverbial expression, signifying the lowest state of servitude, though it may also be understood literally. See below.

**Verse 23. *Now therefore ye are cursed*** Does not this refer to what was pronounced by Noah, Genesis 9:26, against Ham and his posterity? Did not the curse of Ham imply slavery, and nothing else? Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be; and does it not sufficiently appear that nothing else than perpetual slavery is implied in the curse of the Gibeonites? They were brought, no doubt, under tribute; performed the meanest offices for the Israelites, being in the same circumstances with the servile class of Hindoos called the Chetrees; had their national importance annihilated, and yet were never permitted to incorporate themselves with the Israelites. And we may reasonably suppose that this was the purpose of God relative to all the Canaanitish nations: those who would not renounce their idolatry, etc., were to be extirpated; those who did were to

be preserved alive, on condition of becoming tributary, and serving as slaves. See the note on Deuteronomy 20:17.

***Hewers of wood and drawers of water*** The disgrace of this state lay not in the laboriousness of it, but in its being the common employment of the females; if the ancient customs among the same people were such as prevail now. The most intelligent travelers in those countries represent collecting wood for fuel, and carrying water, as the peculiar employment of the females. The Arab women of Barbary do so, according to Dr. Shaw. The daughters of the Turcomans in Palestine are employed, according to D'Arvieux, in fetching wood and water for the accommodation of their respective families. From these circumstances Mr. Harmer reasons thus: "The bitterness of the doom of the Gibeonites does not seem to have consisted in the laboriousness of the service enjoined them, for it was usual for women and children to perform what was required of them; but its degrading them from the characteristic employment of men, that of bearing arms; and condemning them and their posterity for ever to the employment of females. The not receiving them as allies was bitter; the disarming them who had been warriors, and condemning them to the employment of females, was worse; but the extending this degradation to their posterity, was bitterest of all. It is no wonder that in these circumstances they are said to have been cursed." -Obs., vol. iv., p. 297.

**Verse 24. *We were sore afraid of our lives*** Self-preservation, which is the most powerful law of nature, dictated to them those measures which they adopted; and they plead this as the motive of their conduct.

**Verse 25. *We are in thine hand*** Entirely in thy power.

***As it seemeth good and right unto thee-do.*** Whatever justice and mercy dictate to thee to do to us, that perform. They expect justice, because they deceived the Israelites; but they expect mercy also, because they were driven to use this expedient for fear of losing their lives. The appeal to Joshua is full of delicacy and cogent argument.

**Verse 26. *And so did he unto them*** That is, he acted according to justice and mercy: he delivered them out of the hands of the people, so that they slew them not-here was mercy; and he made them hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and to the altar of God-here was

justice. Thus Joshua did nothing but what was good and right, not only in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of the Lord. How long the Gibeonites were preserved as a distinct people after this, we know not. That they existed in the time of David, is evident from the circumstance mentioned on Joshua 9:19. They are not mentioned after the captivity; and it is probable that they were nearly annihilated by the persecution raised up against them by Saul. Some suppose that the Gibeonites existed under the appellation of Nethinim; but of this there is no decisive proof; the Nethinim were probably slaves of a different race. ON what we meet with in this chapter, we may make the following observations. 1. The Gibeonites told lies, in order to save their lives. No expediency can justify this, nor are we called to attempt it. The Gibeonites were heathens, and we can expect nothing better from them. See note at the end of Joshua 2:24. 2. They did not profit by their falsity: had they come in fairly, sought peace, and renounced their idolatry, they would have had life on honorable terms. As it was, they barely escaped with their lives, and were utterly deprived of their political liberty. Even the good that is sought by unlawful means has God's curse on it. 3. We need not be solicitous for the character of the Gibeonites here; they are neither our models, nor believers in the true God, and therefore pure religion is not concerned in their prevarication and falsity. 4. We see here of what solemn importance an oath was considered among the people of God; they swore to their own hurt, and changed not. When once they had bound themselves to their Maker, they did not believe that any changing circumstances could justify a departure from so awful an obligation. Thus, reader, shouldst thou fear a lie, and tremble at an oath.

## CHAPTER 10

*Adoni-zedec, king of Jerusalem, hearing of the capture of Ai, and that the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel, calls to his assistance four other kings to fight against Gibeon, 1-4. They join forces, and encamp against Gibeon, 5. The Gibeonites send to Joshua for succor, 6, who immediately marches to their relief, receives encouragement from God, and falls suddenly on the confederate forces, 7-9, and defeats them; they fly, and multitudes of them are slain by a miraculous shower of hail-stones, 10, 11. Joshua, finding that the day began to fail, prayed that the sun and moon might stand still, that they might have time to pursue and utterly destroy these confederate forces, 12. The sun and moon stand still, and make that day as long as two, 13, 14. Joshua and the people return to their camp at Gilgal, 15. The five kings having taken shelter in a cave at Makkedah, Joshua commanded the people to roll great stones against the mouth of the cave, and set a watch to keep it, while Israel were pursuing their enemies, 16-19. The Israelites return to Makkedah, bring forth the five kings, then slay and hang them on five trees, 20-27. The Israelites take and destroy Makkedah, 28, and Libnah, 29, 30, and Lachish, 31, 32, and defeat Horam king of Gezer, 33, and take Eglon, 34, 35, and Hebron, 36, 37, and Debir, 38, 39, and all the country of the hills, south, vale, and springs, and the whole country from Kadesh-Barnea to Gibeon, 40-42. They return to Gilgal, 43.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1. Adoni-zedec** This name signifies the Lord of justice or righteousness; and it has been conjectured that the Canaanitish kings assumed this name in imitation of that of the ancient patriarchal king of this city, Melchizedek, whose name signifies king of righteousness, or my righteous king: a supposition that is not improbable, when the celebrity of Melchizedek is considered.

**Jerusalem** ירושלים Yerushalam. This word has been variously explained; if it be compounded of שלום shalom, peace, perfection, etc., and ראה raah,



he saw, it may signify the vision of peace-or, he shall see peace or perfection.

**Verse 2. *As one of the royal cities*** Not a regal city, but great, well inhabited and well fortified, as those cities which served for the royal residence generally were. It does not appear that the Gibeonites had any king—they seem to have been a small but powerful republic, all the men thereof were mighty, merely governed by their elders: for in their address to Joshua, Joshua 9:11, they mention no king, but simply state that they were sent by their elders and the inhabitants of their country; nor do we any where read of their king; and therefore we may naturally suppose that they had none.

**Verse 3. *Hoham king of Hebron*** This city was situated in the mountains, southward of Jerusalem, from which it was about thirty miles distant. It fell to the tribe of Judah.

***Piram king of Jarmuth*** There were two cities of this name; one belonged to the tribe of Issachar, see Joshua 21:29; that mentioned here fell to the tribe of Judah, see Joshua 15:35; it is supposed to have been about eighteen miles distant from Jerusalem.

***Japhia king of Lachish*** This city is celebrated in Scripture; in that city Amaziah was slain by conspirators, 2 Kings 14:19. It was besieged by Sennacherib, 2 Kings 18:14, 17; and without effect by the king of Assyria, as we learn from Isaiah 37:8: it was also besieged by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, see Jeremiah 34:7; it also fell to the lot of Judah, Joshua 15:39.

***Debir king of Eglon*** Where this city was situated is very uncertain; but we learn from Joshua 15:39, that it fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah.

**Verse 5. *The five kings of the Amorites*** This is a general name for the inhabitants of Canaan, otherwise called Canaanites; and it is very likely that they had this appellation because the Amorites were the most powerful tribe or nation in that country. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were Jebusites, Joshua 15:63; those of Hebron were Hittites, Genesis 23:2, 3; 25:9, 10; and the Gibeonites were Hivites, Joshua 9:7; and yet all these are called Amorites occasionally, probably for the reason already mentioned, viz., because that tribe was most numerous and powerful.

**Verse 9. *Joshua-came unto them suddenly*** This he did by a forced march during the night, for he went up from Gilgal all night; from Gilgal to Gibeon was about eighteen or twenty miles; and, having fallen so unexpectedly on these confederate kings, they were immediately thrown into confusion.

**Verse 10. *Slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon*** Multitudes of them fell in the onset; after which they fled, and the Israelites pursued them by the way of Beth-horon. There were two cities of this name, the upper and lower, both in the tribe of Ephraim, and built by Sherah, the daughter of Ephraim, 1 Chronicles 7:24. The situation of these two cities is not exactly known.

***To Azekah, and unto Makkedah.*** These two cities were in the tribe of Judah, Joshua 15:35-41.

**Verse 11. *The Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them*** Some have contended that stones, in the common acceptation of the word, are intended here; and that the term hail-stones is only used to point out the celerity of their fall, and their quantity. That stones have fallen from the clouds, if not from a greater height, is a most incontestable fact. That these have fallen in different parts of the world is also true; the East Indies, America, France, Germany, England, Ireland, etc., have all witnessed this phenomenon: of such stones I possess and have seen several fragments; some considerable pieces may be seen in the British Museum. That God might have cast down such stones as these on the Canaanites, there can be no doubt, because his power is unlimited; and the whole account proves that here there was a miraculous interference. But it is more likely that hail-stones, in the proper sense of the word, are meant as well as expressed in the text. That God on other occasions has made use of hail-stones to destroy both men and cattle, we have ample proof in the plague of hail that fell on the Egyptians. See the note on Exodus 9:18. There is now before me a square of glass, taken out of a south window in the house of Mr. Ball of Crockerton, in the parish of Longbridge Deverell, county of Wilts., through which a hail-stone passed in a shower that fell there June 1, 1780, at two o'clock, P.M. The hole is an obtuse ellipsis or oval, and is cut as true as if it had been done with a diamond: it is three inches and a half in diameter; a proof that the stone that pierced it, which was about eleven inches in

circumference, came with inconceivable velocity, else the glass must have been shivered to pieces. I have known a cannon ball go through a square of glass in the cabin window of a ship, and make precisely the same kind of hole, without either shattering or even starring the glass. It is needless to add that this hail-shower did great damage, breaking even trees in pieces, and destroying the vegetation through the whole of its extent. But allowing that extraordinary showers of hail have fallen in England or France, is it likely that such showers ever fell in the promised land or its vicinity? They certainly have. Albertus Aquensis, one of the writers in the collection *Gesta Dei per Francos*, in describing the expedition of Baldwin I. in the Holy Land, observes that, when he and his army were in the Arabian mountains, in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, they suffered incredibly from horrible hail, terrible frost, and indescribable rain and snow, so that thirty of his men perished by them. His words are: “*Sexta vero die montanis permensis, in extremo illorum cacumine maxima pertulerunt pericula, in GRANDINE horribili, in GLACIE terribili, in PLUVIA et NIVE inaudita, quorum immanitate, et horrore ingruente ad triginta homines pedites prae frigore mortui sunt.*” -*Hist. Hieros.*, p. 307. I conclude, therefore, that a shower of hail-stones may be meant; and that this shower, though natural in itself, was supernaturally employed on this occasion, and miraculously directed to fall where it did, and do the execution described. But I am ready to grant, notwithstanding, that as a most stupendous miracle was in this instance wrought, in causing the sun and moon to stand still; there can be no doubt that the shower of stones, which was also miraculous, might have been of real stones as well as hail-stones. Of late, this subject of the fall of real stones from the clouds has been very closely investigated, and not only the possibility of the fall of such stones from the clouds, or from much higher regions, but the certainty of the case has been fully demonstrated. These substances are now, in philosophical language denominated aeroliths or air-stones; and the following table constructed by M. Izarn, a foreign chemist, exhibits a variety of facts of this kind, and shows the places and times in which these substances fell, and the testimony by which these facts are supported. As it is as possible that God might have projected a shower of stones on these idolaters, even from the moon, as to arrest that planet in her course, I give the table, and leave the reader to decide, in the present case, for aeroliths or hail-stones, as may seem to him most congruous to the fact here related.

SUBSTANCES PLACES	WHERE THEY FELL
1 Shower of stones	At Rome.
2 Shower of stones	At Rome.
3 A very large stone	Near the river Negos, Thrace
4 Three large stones	In Thrace.
5 Stone of 72 lbs	Near Larissa, Macedonia.
6 About 1, 200 stones; one 120 lbs.	Near Padua in Italy
7 Another of 60 lbs	On Mount Vasier, Provence
8 Another of 59 lbs	On Mount Vasier, Provence
9 Two large stones weighing 20 lbs	On Mount Vasier, Provence Liponas, in Bresse.
10 A stony mass	Niort, Normandy.
11 A stone of 7 « lbs	At Lure, in Leviticus Maine.
12 A stone	At Aire, in Artois.
13 A stone	In Leviticus Cotentin.
14 Extensive shower of stones	Environs of Agen.
15 About 12 stones	Sienna Tuscany.
16 A large stone of 56 lbs	Wold Cottage, Yorkshire.
17 A stone of 10 lbs	In Portugal.
18 A stone of about 120 lbs	Sale department of the Rhone
19 Shower of stones	Benares, East Indies.
20 Shower of stones	At Plann, near Tabor, Bohemia 21 Mass of iron, 70 cubic feet America.
22 Mass of ditto, 14 quintals	Abakauk, Siberia.
23 Shower of stones	Barboutan, near Roquefort 24 Large stone, 260 lbs Ensisheim, Upper Rhine.
25 Two stones, 200 and 300 lbs	Near Verona.
26 A stone of 20 lbs	Sales, near Ville Franche
27 Several ditto from 10 to 17 lbs	Near L' Aigle, Normandy.

[The Righthand Portion of the Above Chart Continues on the Following Page]

PERIOD OF THEIR FALL	TESTIMONY
1 Under Tullus Hostilius	Livy.
2 Consuls, C	Martius and M Torquatus & J Obsequens.
3 Second year of the 78th Olympiad	Pliny.
4 Year before J.C., 452	Ch. of Count Marcellin
5 January, 1706	Paul Lucas.
6, 7 In 1510	Carden, Varcit.
8 November 27, 1627	Gassendi.
9 September, 1753	Deuteronomy Lamentations Lande.
10 In 1750	Deuteronomy Lamentations Lande.
11 September 13, 1768	Bachelay.
12 In 1768	Gurson de Boyaval
13 In 1768	Morand.
14 July 24, 1790	St Amand, Baudin, etc
15 July, 1794	Earl of Bristol.
16 December 13, 1795	Captain Topham.
17 February 19, 1796	Southey.
18 March 17, 1798	Leviticus Lievre and Deuteronomy Dree
19 December 19, 1798	J Lloyd Williams, Esq
20 July 3, 1753	B de Born.
21 April 5, 1800	Philosophical Magazine
22 Very old	Pallas, Chladni, etc
23 July, 1789	Darcet, jun., Lomet, etc
24 November 7, 1492	Butenschoen.
25 In 1762	Acad de Bourd.
26 March 12, 1798	Deuteronomy Dree.
27 April 26, 1803	Fourcroy.

These stones generally appear luminous in their descent, moving in oblique directions with very great velocities, and commonly with a hissing noise. They are frequently heard to explode or burst, and seem to fly in pieces, the larger parts falling first. They often strike the earth with such force as to sink several inches below the surface. They are always different from the surrounding bodies, but in every case are similar to one another, being semi-metallic, coated with a thin black incrustation. They bear strong marks of recent fusion. Chemists have found on examining these stones that they very nearly agree in their nature and composition, and in the proportions of their component parts. The stone which fell at Ensisheim in Alsace, in 1492, and those which fell at L'Aigle in France, in 1803, yielded, by the Analysis of Fourcroy and Vanquelin, as in this table: —

Their specific gravities are generally about three of four times that of water, being heavier than common stones. From the above account it is reasonable to conclude that they have all the same origin. To account for this phenomenon, various hypotheses have appeared; we shall mention three: 1. That they are little planets, which, circulating in space, fall into the atmosphere, which, by its friction, diminishes the velocity, so that they fall by their weight. 2. That they are concretions formed in the atmosphere. 3. That they are projected from lunar volcanoes. These are the most probable conjectures we can meet with, and of these the two former possess a very small degree of probability, but there are very strong reasons in favor of the last. Among the reasons we may notice the following: 1. Volcanoes in the moon have been observed by means of the telescope. 2. The lunar volcanoes are very high, and the surface of that globe suffers frequent changes, as appears by the late observations of Schroeter. 3. If a body be projected from the moon to a distance greater than that of the point of equilibrium between the attraction of the earth and moon, it will, on the known principle of gravitation, fall to the earth. 4. That a body may be projected from the lunar volcanoes beyond the moon's influence, is not only possible but very probable; for on calculation it is found that four times the force usually given to a twelve pounder, will be quite sufficient for this purpose; it is to be observed that the point of equilibrium is much nearer the moon, and that a projectile from the moon will not be so much retarded as one from the earth, both on

account of the moon's rarer atmosphere, and its less attractive force. On this subject, see Mr. Haward's valuable paper in the Philosophical Transactions for 1802, and Dr. Hutton's dissertation in the new abridgment, part xxi. It is highly probable that the ancile, or sacred shield, that fell from heaven in the reign of Numa Pompilius, was a stone of this sort. The description of its fall, as given by Ovid, Fast. lib. iii., bears a striking resemblance to recent accounts of stones falling from the atmosphere, particularly in the luminous appearance and hissing noise with which it was accompanied.

*Dum loquitur, totum jam sol emererat orbem,  
Et gravis aethereo venit ab axe fragor.  
Ter tonuit sine nube Deus, tria fulgura misit:  
Credite dicenti; mira, sed acta, loquor.  
A media coelum regione dehiscere coepit:  
Summisere oculos cum duce turba suos.  
Ecce levi scutum versatum leniter aura  
Decidit, a pupulo clamor ad astra venit.  
Tolūt humo munus —*

Idque ancile vocat, quod ab omni parte recisum est. It is very possible that the Palladium of Troy, and the Image of the Ephesian Diana, were stones which really fell from the atmosphere, bearing some rude resemblance to the human form. See the IMPERIAL ENCYCLOPEDIA, article Aerolith. I believe it is generally agreed among philosophers, 1. That all these aerial stones, chemically analyzed, show the same properties; 2. That no stone found on our earth possesses exactly the same properties, nor in the same proportions. This is an extraordinary circumstance, and deserves particular notice.

**Verse 12. Then spake Joshua to the Lord** Though Joshua saw that the enemies of his people were put to flight, yet he well knew that all which escaped would rally again, and that he should be obliged to meet them once more in the field of battle if permitted now to escape; finding that the day was drawing towards a close, he feared that he should not have time sufficient to complete the destruction of the confederate armies; in this moment, being suddenly inspired with Divine confidence, he requested the

Lord to perform the most stupendous miracle that had ever been wrought, which was no less than to arrest the sun in his course, and prolong the day till the destruction of his enemies had been completed! Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou,

*Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.* To account for this miracle, and to ascertain the manner in which it was wrought, has employed the pens of the ablest divines and astronomers, especially of the last two centuries. By their learned labors many difficulties have been removed from the account in general; but the very different and contradictory methods pursued by several, in their endeavors to explain the whole, and make the relation accord with the present acknowledged system of the universe, and the phenomena of nature, tend greatly to puzzle the plain, unphilosophical reader. The subject cannot be well explained without a dissertation; and a dissertation is not consistent with the nature of short notes, or a commentary on Scripture. It is however necessary to attempt an explanation, and to bring that as much as possible within the apprehension of common readers, in order to this, I must beg leave to introduce a few preliminary observations, or what the reader may call propositions if he pleases. 1. I take it for granted that a miracle was wrought as nearly as circumstances could admit, in the manner in which it is here recorded. I shall not, therefore, seek for any allegorical or metaphorical interpretations; the miracle is recorded as a fact, and as a fact I take it up. 2. I consider the present accredited system of the universe, called sometimes the Pythagorean, Copernican, or Newtonian system, to be genuine; and also to be the system of the universe laid down in the Mosaic writings—that the SUN is in the center of what is called the solar system; and that the earth and all the other planets, whether primary or secondary, move round him in certain periodical times, according to the quantity of their matter, and distance from him, their center. 3. I consider the sun to have no revolution round any orbit, but to revolve round his own axis, and round the common center of gravity in the planetary system, which center of gravity is included within his own surface; and in all other respects I consider him to be at rest in the system. 4. I consider the earth, not only as revolving round the sun in 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 48 seconds, but as revolving round its own axis, and making this revolution in 23 hours, 56 minutes, and 4 seconds; that in the course of 24 hours complete, every part of its



surface is alternately turned to the sun; that this revolution constitutes our day and night, as the former does our year; and it is day to all those parts which have the sun above the horizon, and night to those which have the sun below it; and that this diurnal revolution of the earth, or revolving round its own axis, in a direction from west to east, occasions what is commonly called the rising and setting of the sun, which appearance is occasioned, not by any motion in the sun himself, but by this motion of the earth; which may be illustrated by a ball or globe suspended by a thread, and caused to turn round. If this be held opposite to a candle, it will appear half enlightened and half dark; but the dark parts will be seen to come successively into the light, and the enlightened parts into the shade; while the candle itself which gives the light is fixed, not changing its position. 5. I consider the solar influence to be the cause both of the annual and diurnal motion of the earth; and that, while that influence continues to act upon it according to the law which God originally impressed on both the earth and the sun, the annual and diurnal motions of the earth must continue; and that no power but the unlimited power of God can alter this influence, change, or suspend the operation of this law; but that he is such an infinitely FREE AGENT, that HE can, when his unerring wisdom sees good, alter, suspend, or even annihilate all secondary causes and their effects: for it would be degrading to the perfections of his nature to suppose that he had so bound himself by the laws which he has given for the preservation and direction of universal nature, that he could not change them, alter their effects, or suspend their operations when greater and better effects, in a certain time or place, might be produced by such temporary change or suspension. 6. I consider that the miracle wrought on this occasion served greatly to confirm the Israelites, not only in the belief of the being and perfections of God, but also in the doctrine of an especial providence, and in the nullity of the whole system of idolatry and superstition. 7. That no evil was done by this miraculous interference, nor any law or property of nature ultimately changed; on the contrary, a most important good was produced, which probably, to this people, could not have been brought about any other way; and that therefore the miracle wrought on this occasion was highly worthy of the wisdom and power of God. 8. I consider that the terms in the text employed to describe this miracle are not, when rightly understood, contrary to the well-established notions of the true system of the universe; and are not spoken, as some

have contended, *ad captum vulgi*, to the prejudices of the common people, much less do they favor the Ptolemaic or any other hypothesis that places the earth in the center of the solar system. Having laid down these preliminaries, some short observations on the words of the text may be sufficient. Joshua's address is in a poetic form in the original, and makes the two following hemistichs: —

שמש בגבעו דום  
וירח בעמק אילון

*Shemesh begibon dom:  
Veyareach beemek Aiyalon.*

*Sun! upon Gibeon be dumb:*

And the moon on the vale of Ajalon. The effect of this command is related, Joshua 10:13, in the following words: — **וידם השמש וירח עמד** vaiyiddom HASHSHEMESH VEYAREACH amad, And the sun was dumb or silent and the moon stood still. And in the latter clause of this verse it is added: And the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day. It seems necessary here to answer the question, At what time of the day did this miracle take place? The expression **בְּחִצֵּי הַשָּׁמַיִם** bachatsi hashshamayim, in the midst of heaven, seems to intimate that the sun was at that time on the meridian of Gibeon, and consequently had one half of its course to run; and this sense of the place has been strongly contended for as essential to the miracle, for the greater display of the glory of God: "Because," say its abettors, "had the miracle been wrought when the sun was near the going down, it might have been mistaken for some refraction of the rays of light, occasioned by a peculiarly moist state of the atmosphere in the horizon of that place, or by some such appearance as the Aurora Borealis." To me there seems no solidity in this reason. Had the sun been arrested in the meridian, the miracle could scarcely have been noticed, and especially in the hurry and confusion of that time; and we may be assured, that among the Canaanites there were neither clocks nor time-keepers, by which the preternatural length of such a day could have been accurately measured: but, on the contrary, had the sun been about the setting, when both the pursuers and

the pursued must be apprehensive of its speedy disappearance, its continuance for several hours above the horizon, so near the point when it might be expected to go down, must have been very observable and striking. The enemy must see, feel, and deplore it; as their hope of escape must, in such circumstances, be founded on the speedy entering in of the night, through which alone they could expect to elude the pursuing Israelites. And the Israelites themselves must behold with astonishment and wonder that the setting sun hastened not to go down about a whole day, affording them supernatural time totally to destroy a routed foe, which otherwise might have had time to rally, confederate, choose a proper station, and attack in their turn with peculiar advantages, and a probability of success. It appears, therefore, much more reasonable that Joshua should require this miracle to be performed when daylight was about to fail, just as the sun was setting. If we were to consider the sun as being at the meridian of Gibeon, as some understand the midst of heaven, it may be well asked, How could Joshua know that he should not have time enough to complete the destruction of his enemies, who were now completely routed? Already multitudes of them had fallen by the hail-stones and by the sword: and if he had yet half a day before him, it would have been natural enough for him to conclude that he had a sufficiency of time for the purpose, his men having been employed all night in a forced march, and half a day in close fighting; and indeed had he not been under an especial inspiration, he could not have requested the miracle at all, knowing, as he must have done, that his men must be nearly exhausted by marching all night and fighting all day. But it may be asked, What is the meaning of **בַּחֲצֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם** bachatsi hashshamayim, which we translate in the midst of heaven? If, with Mr. Bate, we translate **חֲצָה** chatsah, to part, divide asunder, then it may refer to the horizon, which is the apparent division of the heavens into the upper and lower hemisphere; and thus the whole verse has been understood by some eminently learned men, who have translated the whole passage thus: And the sun stood still in the (upper) hemisphere of heaven, and hastened not to go down when the day was complete; that is, though the day was then complete, the sun being on the horizon; the line that to the eye constituted the mid heaven-yet it hastened not to go down; was miraculously sustained in its then almost setting position; and this seems still more evident from the moon's appearing at that time, which it is not reasonable to suppose could be visible in the glare

of light occasioned by a noon-day sun. But the main business relative to the standing still of the sun still remains to be considered. I have already assumed, as a thoroughly demonstrated truth, that the sun is in the center of the system, moving only round his own axis, and the common center of the gravity of the planetary system, while all the planets revolve round him, Prop. 2 and 3; that his influence is the cause of the diurnal and annual revolutions of the earth; nor can I see what other purpose his revolution round his own axis can possibly answer, Prop. 5. I consider that the word **דָּוַם** dom, in the text, refers to the withholding or restraining this influence, so that the cessation of the earth's motion might immediately take place. The desire of Joshua was, that the sun might not sink below the horizon; but as it appeared now to be over Gibeon, and the moon to be over the valley of Ajalon, he prayed that they might continue in these positions till the battle should be ended; or, in other words, that the day should be miraculously lengthened out. Whether Joshua had a correct philosophical notion of the true system of the universe, is a subject that need not come into the present inquiry: but whether he spoke with strict propriety on this occasion is a matter of importance, because he must be considered as acting under the Divine influence, in requesting the performance of such a stupendous miracle; and we may safely assert that no man in his right mind would have thought of offering such a petition had he not felt himself under some Divine afflatus. Leaving, therefore, his philosophic knowledge out of the question, he certainly spoke as if he had known that the solar influence was the cause of the earth's rotation, and therefore, with the strictest philosophic propriety, he requested that that influence might be for a time restrained, that the diurnal motion of the earth might be arrested, through which alone the sun could be kept above the horizon, and day be prolonged. His mode of expression evidently considers the sun as the great ruler or master in the system; and all the planets (or at least the earth) moving in their respective orbits at his command. He therefore desires him, in the name and by the authority of his Creator, to suspend his mandate with respect to the earth's motion, and that of its satellite, the moon. Had he said, Earth, stand thou still, the cessation of whose diurnal motion was the effect of his command, it could not have obeyed him; as it is not even the secondary cause either of its annual motion round the sun, or its diurnal motion round its own axis. Instead of doing so, he speaks to the sun, the cause (under God) of all these motions, as his great archetype did

when, in the storm on the sea of Tiberias, he rebuked the wind first, and then said to the waves, Peace! be still! **σιωπα, πεφιμωσο** Be SILENT! be DUMB! Mark 4:39; and the effect of this command was a cessation of the agitation in the sea, because the wind ceased to command it, that is, to exert its influence upon the waters. The terms in this command are worthy of particular note: Joshua does not say to the sun, Stand still, as if he had conceived him to be running his race round the earth; but, Be silent or inactive, that is, as I understand it, Restrain thy influence-no longer act upon the earth, to cause it to revolve round its axis; a mode of speech which is certainly consistent with the strictest astronomical knowledge; and the writer of the account, whether Joshua himself or the author of the book of Jasher, in relating the consequence of this command is equally accurate, using a word widely different when he speaks of the effect the retention of the solar influence had on the moon: in the first case the sun was silent or inactive, **דום** dom; in the latter, the moon stood still, **עמד** amad. The standing still of the moon, or its continuance above the horizon, would be the natural effect of the cessation of the solar influence, which obliged the earth to discontinue her diurnal rotation, which of course would arrest the moon; and thus both it and the sun were kept above the horizon, probably for the space of a whole day. As to the address to the moon, it is not conceived in the same terms as that to the sun, and for the most obvious philosophical reasons; all that is said is simply, and the moon on the vale of Ajalon, which may be thus understood: "Let the sun restrain his influence or be inactive, as he appears now upon Gibeon, that the moon may continue as she appears now over the vale of Ajalon." It is worthy of remark that every word in this poetic address is apparently selected with the greatest caution and precision. Persons who are no friends to Divine revelation say "that the account given of this miracle supposes the earth to be in the center of the system, and the sun moveable; and as this is demonstrably a false philosophy, consequently the history was never dictated by the Spirit of truth." Others, in answer, say "that the Holy Spirit condescends to accommodate himself to the apprehensions of the vulgar. The Israelites would naturally have imagined that Joshua was deranged had he bid the earth stand still, which they grant would have been the most accurate and philosophical mode of command on this occasion." But with due deference both to the objectors and defenders I must assert, that such a form of speech on such an occasion

would have been utterly unphilosophic; and that the expressions found in the Hebrew text are such as Sir Isaac Newton himself might have denominated, every thing considered, elegant, correct, and sublime. Nor does it at all appear that the prejudices of the vulgar were consulted on this occasion; nor is there a word here, when properly understood that is inconsistent with the purest axiom of the soundest philosophy, and certainly nothing that implies any contradiction. I grant that when the people have to do with astronomical and philosophical matters, then the terms of the science may be accommodated to their apprehensions; it is on this ground that Sir Isaac Newton himself speaks of the rising and of the setting of the sun, though all genuine philosophers know that these appearances are produced by the rotation of the earth on its own axis from west to east. But when matters of this kind are to be transacted between God and his prophets, as in the above case, then subjects relative to philosophy are conceived in their proper terms, and expressed according to their own nature. At the conclusion of the 13th verse a different expression is used when it is said, So the sun stood still, it is not **דָּם דָּם** dom, but **עָמַד** amad; **וַיַּעֲמֵד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ** vaiyaamod hashshemesh, which expression, thus varying from that in the command of Joshua, may be considered as implying that in order to restrain his influence which I have assumed to be the cause of the earth's motion, the sun himself became inactive, that is, ceased to revolve round his own axis, which revolution is probably one cause, not only of the revolution of the earth, but of all the other planetary bodies in our system, and might have affected all the planets at the time in question; but this neither could nor did produce any disorder in nature; and the delay of a few hours in the whole planetary motions dwindles away into an imperceptible point in the thousands of years of their revolutions. But the whole effect mentioned here might have been produced by the cessation of the diurnal motion of the earth, the annual being still continued; and I contend that this was possible to Omnipotence, and that such a cessation might have taken place without occasioning the slightest disturbance in the motions of any others of the planetary system. It is vain to cry out and say, "Such a cessation of motion in one planet could not take place without disordering the motions of all the rest;" this I deny, and those who assert it neither know the Scripture nor the power of God; therefore they do greatly err. That the day was preternaturally lengthened, is a Scripture fact. That it was so by a miracle, is asserted; and whether

that miracle was wrought as above stated, is a matter of little consequence; the thing is a Scripture fact, whether we know the *modus operandi* or not. I need scarcely add that the command of Joshua to the sun is to be understood as a prayer to God (from whom the sun derived his being and his continuance) that the effect might be what is expressed in the command: and therefore it is said, Joshua 10:14, that the LORD HEARKENED UNTO THE VOICE OF A MAN, for the Lord fought for Israel. I have thus gone through the different parts of this astonishing miracle, and have endeavored to account for the whole in as plain and simple a manner as possible. It is not pretended that this account should satisfy every reader, and that every difficulty is solved; it would be impossible to do this in such a compass as that by which I am necessarily circumscribed; and I have been obliged, for the sake of brevity, to throw into the form of propositions or observations, several points which may appear to demand illustration and proof; for such I must refer the reader to *Astronomical Treatises*. Calmet, Scheuchzer, and Saurin, with several of our own countrymen, have spoken largely on this difficult subject, but in such a way as, I am obliged to confess, has given me little satisfaction, and which appears to me to leave the main difficulties unremoved. Conscious of the difficulties of this subject, I beg leave to address every candid reader in the often quoted words of an eminent author: —

*Vive, Vale! si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.*

*Hor. Epist. l. i., E. vi., ver. 68.*

*Farewell! and if a better system's thine,  
Impart it frankly or make use of mine.*

FRANCIS.

**Book of Jasher** The book of the upright. See the note on Numbers 21:14. Probably this was a book which, in reference to Joshua and his transactions, was similar to the commentaries of Caesar, on his wars with the Gauls. Critics and commentators are greatly divided in their sentiments

relative to the nature of this book. The opinion above appears to me the most probable.

**Verse 14. *And there was no day like that*** There was no period of time in which the sun was kept so long above the horizon as on that occasion. Some learned men have supposed that the Fable of Phaeton was founded on this historic fact. The fable may be seen with all the elegance of poetic embellishment in the commencement of the second book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; but I confess I can see nothing in the pretended copy that can justify the above opinion.

**Verse 15. *And Joshua returned-unto the camp to Gilgal.*** That the Israelitish army did not return to the camp at Gilgal till after the hanging of the five kings and the destruction of their cities, is sufficiently evident from the subsequent parts of this chapter. When all this business was done, and not before, they returned unto the camp to Gilgal; see Joshua 10:43. This verse is omitted by the Septuagint and by the Anglo-Saxon; and it does not appear to have existed in the ancient hexaplar versions; it stands in its proper place in Joshua 10:43, and is not only useless where it is, but appears to be an encumbrance to the narrative. Should it be considered as genuine and in its proper place, I would propose that **מקדה** makkedah should be read instead of **גלגלה** gilgalah, for we find from Joshua 10:21 that Joshua had a temporary camp there. Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to **MAKKEDAH**; after which we may suppose that Joshua having secured the cave, sent some detachments to scour the country and cut off all the remaining straggling Canaanites; when this was done they also returned to the camp at Makkedah, as is related Joshua 10:21, and when the business was completed they struck the camp at Makkedah, and all returned to their fortified camp at Gilgal, Joshua 10:43.

**Verse 16. *Hid themselves in a cave*** It is very likely that this cave was a fortified place among some rocks; for there were many such places in different parts of Palestine.

**Verse 21. *None moved his tongue*** The whole transaction of this important day had been carried on so evidently under the direction of God that there was not the least murmuring, nor cause for it, among them, for



their enemies were all discomfited. There is an expression similar to this, Exodus 11:7, on which the reader is requested to consult the note.

**Verse 24. *Put your feet upon the necks of these kings.*** This act was done symbolically, as a token, not only of the present complete victory, but of their approaching triumph over all their adversaries, which is the interpretation given of it by Joshua in the succeeding verse.

**Verse 26. *Smote-slew-and hanged them on five trees*** Hanging alive seems a barbarous custom: among the Hebrews, criminals were first deprived of life; this was the debt required by justice: then they were hanged up, perhaps generally by the hands, not by the neck; this was done by way of example, to deter others from committing the crimes for which those had suffered: but they were never permitted to hang thus exposed all night, as this could have answered no purpose, either of justice or example, as they could not be seen in the night-season. One day also was deemed enough for their exposure, it being thought sufficient to show the public that justice had been executed; and to have exhibited them longer would have appeared to be a barbarous cruelty which attempted to extend punishment beyond the possible requisitions of justice. See the note on Deuteronomy 21:23.

**Verse 28. *That day Joshua took Makkedah*** It is very possible that Makkedah was taken on the evening of the same day in which the miraculous solstice took place; but as to the other cities mentioned in this chapter, they certainly were subdued some days after, as it is not possible that an army, exhausted as this must have been with a whole night's march, and two days' hard fighting, could have proceeded farther than Makkedah that night; the other cities were successively taken in the following days.

**Verse 29. *Fought against Libnah*** This city was near Makkedah, see Joshua 15:42, and fell to the tribe of Judah, Joshua 10:20, 42, and was given to the priests, Joshua 21:13. Sennacherib besieged it, after he had been obliged to raise the siege of Lachish. See 2 Kings 19:8; Isaiah 37:8.

**Verse 32. *Lachish*** It appears that this was anciently a very strong place; notwithstanding the people were panic-struck, and the Israelites flushed with success, yet Joshua could not reduce it till the second day, and the

king of Assyria afterwards was obliged to raise the siege. See above, and see the note on Joshua 10:3.

**Verse 33. *Horam king of Gezer*** It is likely that Horam was in a state of alliance with the king of Lachish, and therefore came to his assistance as soon as it appeared that he was likely to be attacked. Joshua probably sent a detachment against him, before he was able to form a junction with the forces of Lachish; and utterly destroyed him and his army. Gezer is supposed to have been situated near Azotus. See 1Mac 16:34. It fell to the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua 16:3, but was probably taken afterwards by some of the remnant of the Canaanitish nations; for we find it was given by Pharaoh to his son-in-law Solomon, 1 Kings 9:16, which proves that it had got out of the possession of the Israelites previously to the days of Solomon.

**Verse 34. *Eglon*** It is likely that this town was not any great distance from Lachish. See on Joshua 10:3.

**Verse 36. — 37. *Hebron-and the king thereof*** See the note on Joshua 10:3. From Joshua 10:23 we learn that the king of Hebron was one of those five whom Joshua slew and hanged on five trees at Makkedah. How then can it be said that he slew the king of Hebron when he took the city, which was some days after the transactions at Makkedah? Either this slaying of the king of Hebron must refer to what had already been done, or the Hebronites, finding that their king fell in battle, had set up another in his place; which was the king Joshua slew, after he had taken the city and its dependencies, as is related Joshua 10:37. It appears that the city of Hebron had fallen back into the hands of the Canaanites, for it was again taken from them by the tribe of Judah, Judges 1:10. Debir had also fallen into their hands, for it was reconquered by Othniel, the son-in-law of Caleb, Judges 1:11-13. The manner in which Calmet accounts for this is very natural: Joshua, in his rapid conquests, contented himself with taking, demolishing, and burning those cities; but did not garrison any of them, for fear of weakening his army. In several instances no doubt the scattered Canaanites returned, repeopled, and put those cities in a state of defense. Hence the Israelites were obliged to conquer them a second time. This is a more rational way of accounting for these things, than that which supposes that the first chapter of Judges gives the more detailed account

of the transactions recorded here; for there it is expressly said, that these transactions took place after the death of Joshua, (see Judges 1:1,) and consequently cannot be the same that are mentioned here.

**Verse 37.** See Clarke on “Joshua 10:36”.

**Verse 39. *Destroyed all the souls*** וַיַּחַרְיִמוּ אֶת כָּל נֶפֶשׁ vaiyacharimu eth col nephesh, they brought every person under an anathema; they either slew them or reduced them to a state of slavery. Is it reasonable to say those were slain who were found in arms, of the others they made slaves?

**Verse 40. *All the country of the hills*** See the note on Deuteronomy 1:7.

***Destroyed all that breathed*** Every person found in arms who continued to resist; these were all destroyed,-those who submitted were spared: but many no doubt made their escape, and afterwards reoccupied certain parts of the land. See Joshua 10:36, 37.

**Verse 41. *And all the country of Goshen*** Calmet contends that this was the very same country in which the Hebrews dwelt before their departure from Egypt; and according to this hypothesis he has constructed his map, causing it to extend from the Nile, which was called the river of Egypt, along the frontiers of the land of Cush or Arabia. It however appears plain that there was a city named Goshen in the tribe of Judah, see Joshua 15:51; and this probably gave name to the adjacent country which may be that referred to above.

**Verse 42. *Did Joshua take at one time*** That is, he defeated all those kings, and took all their cities, in ONE campaign; this appears to be the rational construction of the Hebrew. But these conquests were so rapid and stupendous, that they cannot be attributed either to the generalship of Joshua, or the valor of the Israelites; and hence the author himself, disclaiming the merit of them, modestly and piously adds, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. It was by this aid that Joshua took all these kings and their land at one time-in a single campaign. And when all the circumstances related in this chapter are properly weighed, we shall find that GOD alone could have performed these works, and that both reason and piety require that to HIM alone they should be attributed. 1. THE principal subjects of this important chapter have been considered so much in detail in the preceding notes, that there is little room to add any

thing to what has already been said. The principal subject is the miracle of the sun's standing still; and to assert that all difficulties have been removed by the preceding notes and observations, would be to say what the writer does not believe, and what few readers would perhaps feel disposed to credit. Yet it is hoped that the chief difficulties have been removed, and the miracle itself shown to have nothing contradictory in it. If, as is generally

## CHAPTER 11

*The Kings of Hazor, Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, with those of the mountains, plains, etc., and various chiefs of the Canaanites and Amorites, confederate against Israel, 1-3. They pitch their tents at the waters of Merom, 4, 5. The Lord encourages Joshua, 6. He attacks and discomfits them, 7, 8. Houghs all their horses, and burns all their chariots, 9. Takes and burns several of their cities, 10-13. The Israelites take the spoils, 14, 15. An account of the country taken by Joshua, 16-18. The Gibeonites only make peace with Israel, 19. All the rest resist and are overcome, 20. Joshua cuts off the Anakim, 21, 22. The conquered lands are given to Israel, and the war is concluded, 23,*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. Jabin king of Hazor** It is probable that Jabin was the common name of all the kings of Hazor. That king, by whom the Israelites were kept in a state of slavery for twenty years, and who was defeated by Deborah and Barak, was called by this name; see Judges 4:2, 3, 23. The name signifies wise or intelligent. The city of Hazor was situated above the Lake Semechon, in Upper Galilee, according to Josephus, *Antiq. lib. v., c. 6*. It was given to the tribe of Naphtali, Joshua 19:36, who it appears did not possess it long; for though it was burnt by Joshua, Joshua 11:11, it is likely that the Canaanites rebuilt it, and restored the ancient government, as we find a powerful king there about one hundred and thirty years after the death of Joshua, Judges 4:1. It is the same that was taken by Tiglath-pileser, together with Kadesh, to which it is contiguous; see 2 Kings 15:29. It is supposed to have given name to the Valley or Plain of Hazor or Nador, situated between it and Kadesh, where Jonathan and Mattathias defeated the armies of Demetrius, and slew three thousand of their men, 1Mac 11:63-74. It was in ancient times the metropolitan city of all that district, and a number of petty kings or chieftains were subject to its king, see Joshua 11:10; and it is likely that it was those tributary kings who were summoned to attend the king of Hazor on this occasion; for Joshua having conquered the southern part of the promised land, the

northern parts seeing themselves exposed made now a common interest, and, joining with Jabin, endeavored to put a stop to the progress of the Israelites. See Calmet

**Jobab king of Madon** This royal city is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture except in Joshua 12:19. The Vatican copy of the Septuagint reads **μαρων**, Maron, which, if legitimate, Calmet thinks may mean Maronia or Merath in Phoenicia, to the north of Mount Libanus. The Hebrew text reads **מֶרֶן** Meron, Joshua 12:20, after Shimron, which is probably the same with **מֶדֶן** Madon, Joshua 11:19, the word having casually dropped out of the preceding place into the latter, and the **ר** resh and **ד** daleth being interchanged, which might have easily happened from the great similarity of the letters. Hence Calmet conjectures that it may be the same place with **מֶרוֹז** Meroz, Judges 5:23, the **ז** zain and **ן** final nun being interchanged, which they might easily, as they are so very similar.

**King of Shimron** This city is supposed to be the same with Symira, in Coelosyria, joined to Maron or Marath, by Pliny and Pomponius Mela. It cannot be Samaria, as that had its name long after by Omri king of Israel. See 1 Kings 16:24.

**King of Achshaph** Calmet supposes this to have been the city of Ecdippe, mentioned by Pliny, Ptolemy, Josephus, and Eusebius. The latter places it within ten miles of Ptolemais, on the road to Tyre. It fell to the tribe of Asher. See Joshua 19:26.

**Verse 2. On the north of the mountains** Or the mountain, probably Hermon, or some mountain not far from the lake of Gennesareth.

**And of the plains** That is, the valleys of the above mountains, which had the sea of Chinneroth or Gennesareth on the south.

**Chinneroth** This city is supposed by St. Jerome and several others since his time, to be the same as was afterwards called Tiberias. From this city or village the sea of Chinneroth or Gennesareth probably had its name.

**And in the borders of Dor** Calmet supposes this to mean the champaign country of the higher and lower Galilee, on to the Mediterranean Sea, and to the village or city of Dor, which was the farthest city of Phoenicia.

Dor was in the lot of the half tribe of Manasseh, and was situated on the Mediterranean Sea, three leagues from Caesarea, and seven from Ptolemais.

**Verse 3. *The Canaanite on the east, etc.*** Those who dwelt on the borders of Jordan, south of the sea of Tiberias.

***On the west*** Those were the Phoenicians who dwelt on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, from Dor northwards, on the way to Mount Libanus. — Calmet.

***The Hivite under Hermon*** Mount Hermon was to the east of Libanus and the fountains of Jordan; it is the same with Syrion and Baal Hermon in Scripture

***The land of Mizpeh.*** There were several cities of this name: one in the tribe of Judah, (Joshua 15:38;) a second in the tribe of Benjamin, (Joshua 18:26;) a third beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad; and a fourth beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh, which is that mentioned in the text. See Wells's Geography. Calmet supposes this Mizpeh to be the place where Laban and Jacob made their covenant, and from which circumstance it took its name. See Genesis 31:48, 49.

**Verse 4. *Much people, even as the sand*** This form of speech, by some called a hyperbole, conveys simply the idea of a vast or unusual number—a number of which no regular estimate could be easily formed. Josephus, who seldom finds difficulties in such cases, and makes no scruple of often speaking without book, tells us that the allied armies amounted to 300, 000 foot 10, 000 horse, and 20, 000 chariots of war. Antiq. lib. v., c. 1. That chariots were frequently used in war, all the records of antiquity prove; but it is generally supposed that among the Canaanites they were armed with iron scythes fastened to their poles and to the naves of their wheels. Terrible things are spoken of these, and the havoc made by them when furiously driven among the ranks of infantry. Of what sort the cavalry was, we know not; but from the account here given we may see what great advantages these allies possessed over the Israelites, whose armies consisted of infantry only.

**Verse 5. *The waters of Merom*** Where these waters were, interpreters are not agreed. Whether they were the waters of the Lake Semechon, or the

waters of Megiddo, mentioned Judges 5:19, cannot be easily determined. The latter is the more probable opinion.

**Verse 6. *Be not afraid-of them*** To meet such a formidable host so well equipped, in their own country, furnished with all that was necessary to supply a numerous army, required more than ordinary encouragement in Joshua's circumstances. This communication from God was highly necessary, in order to prevent the people from desponding on the eve of a conflict, in which their all was at stake.

**Verse 7. *By the waters of Merom suddenly*** Joshua, being apprised of this grand confederation, lost no time, but marched to meet them; and before they could have supposed him at hand, fell suddenly upon them, and put them to the rout.

**Verse 8. *Great Sidon*** If this were the same with the Sidon of the ancients, it was illustrious long before the Trojan war; and both it and its inhabitants are frequently mentioned by Homer as excelling in works of skill and utility, and abounding in wealth: —

ενθ' εσαν οι πεπλοι παμποικιλοι, εογα γυναικων  
σιδονιων.

Iliad, lib. vi., ver. 289.

*“There lay the ventures of no vulgar art,  
SIDONIAN maids embroidered every part.”*  
POPE

αργυρεον κρητηρα τετυγμενον εξ δ' αρα μετρα  
χανδανεν, αυταρ καλλει ενικα πασαν επ' αιαν  
πολλον, επι σιδονες πολυδαιδαλοι ευ ησκησαν.

Iliad, lib. xxiii., ver. 741.

*“A silver urn that full six measures held,  
By none in weight or workmanship excell'd;  
SIDONIAN artists taught the frame to shine,  
Elaborate with artifice divine.”*

POPE



εκ μεν σιδωνος πολυχαλκου ευχομαι ειναι.

Odyss. xv. 424.

“I am of SIDON, famous for her wealth.” The art of making glass is attributed by Pliny to this city: SIDON artifex vitri, Hist. Nat. l. v., c. 19.

**Misrephoth-maim** Or, Misrephoth of the waters. What this place was is unknown, but Calmet conjectures it to be the same with Sarepta, a city of Phoenicia, contiguous to Sidon. The word signifies the burning of the waters, or inflammation; probably it was a place noted for its hot springs: this idea seems to have struck Luther, as he translates it, die warme wasser, the hot waters.

**Verse 9. He houghed their horses** The Hebrew word עקר akar, which we render to hough or hamstring, signifies to wound, cut, or lop off. It is very likely that it means here, not only an act by which they were rendered useless, but by which they were destroyed; as God had purposed that his people should not possess any cattle of this kind, that a warlike and enterprising spirit might not be cultivated among them; and that, when obliged to defend themselves and their country, they might be led to depend upon God for protection and victory. On the same ground, God had forbidden the kings of Israel to multiply horses, Deuteronomy 17:16. See the note there containing the reasons on which this prohibition was founded.

**Burnt their chariots** As these could have been of no use without the horses.

**Verse 10. Took Hazor** See on Joshua 11:1.

**Verse 13. The cities that stood still in their strength** The word תלם tillam, which we translate their strength, and the margin, their heap, has been understood two ways. 1. As signifying those cities which had made peace with the Israelites, when conditions of peace were offered according to the command of the law; and consequently were not destroyed. Such as the cities of the Hivites; see Joshua 11:19. 2. The cities which were situated upon hills and mountains, which, when taken, might be retained

with little difficulty. In this sense the place is understood by the Vulgate, as pointing out the cities quae erant in collibus et tumulis sitae, “which were situated on hills and eminences.” As the cities of the plain might be easily attacked and carried, Joshua destroyed them; but as those on mountains, hills, or other eminences, might be retained with little trouble, prudence would dictate their preservation, as places of refuge in any insurrection of the people, or invasion of their adversaries. The passage in Jeremiah, Jeremiah 30:18, Jerusalem shall be builded on her own heap,

**Verse 18. *Joshua made war a long time*** The whole of these conquests were not effected in one campaign: they probably required six or seven years. There are some chronological notices in this book, and in Deuteronomy, by which the exact time may be nearly ascertained. Caleb was forty years old when he was sent from Kadesh-barnea by Moses to search out the land, about A.M. 2514; and at the end of this war he was eighty-five years old; (compare Joshua 14:10 with Numbers 13, and Deuteronomy 1.) consequently the war ended in 2559, which had begun, by the passage of Jordan, on the tenth day of the first month of the year 2554. From this date to the end of 2559 we find exactly six years; the first of which Joshua seems to have employed in the conquest of the south part of the land of Canaan, and the other five in the conquest of all the territories situated on the north of that country. See Dodd. Calmet computes this differently, and allows the term of seven years for the conquest of the whole land. "Caleb was forty years old when sent from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land. At the conclusion of the war he was eighty-five years old, as himself says, Joshua 14:10. From this sum of eighty-five subtract forty, his age when he went from Kadesh-barnea, and the thirty-eight years which he spent in the wilderness after his return, and there will remain the sum of seven years, which was the time spent in the conquest of the land." 1. By protracting the war the Canaanites had time to repent, having sufficient opportunity to discern the hand of Jehovah. 2. Agriculture was carried on, and thus provision was made even for the support of the conquerors, for had the land been subdued and wasted at once, tillage must have stopped, and famine would have ensued. 3. Wild beasts would have multiplied upon them, and the land have been desolated by their means. 4. Had these conquests been more rapid the people of Israel would have been less affected, and less instructed by miracles that had passed in such quick succession before their eyes; and, as in this case they would have obtained the dominion with comparatively little exertion, they might have felt themselves less interested in the preservation of an inheritance, to obtain which they had been but at little trouble and little expense. What we labor under the Divine blessing to acquire we are careful to retain; but what comes lightly generally goes lightly. God obliged them to put forth their own strength in this work, and only blessed and prospered them while they were workers together with him. See the note on Joshua 13:6.

**Verse 20. *It was of the Lord to harden their hearts*** They had sinned against all the light they had received, and God left them justly to the hardness, obstinacy, and pride of their own hearts; for as they chose to retain their idolatry, God was determined that they should be cut off. For as no city made peace with the Israelites but Gibeon and some others of the Hivites, Joshua 11:19, it became therefore necessary to destroy them; for their refusal to make peace was the proof that they wilfully persisted in their idolatry.

**Verse 21. *Cut off the Anakims-from Hebron, from Debir*** This is evidently a recapitulation of the military operations detailed Joshua 10:36-41.

***Destroyed-their cities*** That is, those of the Anakims; for from Joshua 11:13 we learn that Joshua preserved certain other cities.

**Verse 22. *In Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod*** The whole race of the Anakims was extirpated in this war, except those who had taken refuge in the above cities, which belonged to the Philistines; and in which some of the descendants of Anak were found even in the days of David.

**Verse 23. *So Joshua took the whole land*** All the country described here and in the preceding chapter. Besides the multitudes that perished in this war, many of the Canaanites took refuge in the confines of the land, and in the neighboring nations. Some suppose that a party of these fugitive Canaanites made themselves masters of Lower Egypt, and founded a dynasty there known by the name of the shepherd kings; but it is more probable that the shepherds occupied Egypt long before the time that Jacob went thither to sojourn. It is said they founded Tingris or Tangier, where, according to Procopius, they erected two white pillars with an inscription in the Phoenician language, of which this is the translation: WE ARE THE PERSONS WHO HAVE FLED FROM THE FACE OF JOSHUA THE PLUNDERER, THE SOFT OF NAVE or Nun. See Bochart, Phaleg and Canaan, lib. i., c. xxiv., col. 476. Many, no doubt, settled in different parts of Africa, in Asia Minor, in Greece, and in the different islands of the AEgean and Mediterranean Sea: it is supposed also that colonies of this people were spread over different parts of Germany and Sclavonia, etc., but their descendants are now so confounded with the nations of the earth, as no longer to retain their original names, or to be discernible.

*And Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel* He claimed no peculiar jurisdiction over it; his own family had no peculiar share of it, and himself only the ruined city of Timnath-serah, in the tribe of Ephraim, which he was obliged to rebuild. See Joshua 19:49, 50, and see his character at the end of the book.

*And the land rested from war.* The whole territory being now conquered, which God designed the Israelites should possess at this time. ACCORDING to the apostle, Hebrews 4:8, etc., Joshua himself was a type of Christ; the promised land, of the kingdom of heaven, the victories which he gained, of the victory and triumph of Christ; and the rest he procured for Israel, of the state of blessedness, at the right hand of God. In this light we should view the whole history, in order to derive those advantages from it which, as a portion of the revelation of God, it was intended to convey. Those who finally reign with Christ are they who, through his grace, conquer the world, the devil, and the flesh; for it is only of those who thus overcome that he says, "They shall sit with me on my throne, as I have overcome, and am set down with the Father on the Father's throne;" Revelation 3:21. Reader, art thou a conqueror?

## CHAPTER 12

*A list of the kings on the east of Jordan, which were conquered by MOSES, with their territories, 1-6. A list of those on the west side of Jordan, conquered by JOSHUA, in number thirty-one, 7-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1.** From the river Arnon unto Mount Hermon Arnon was the boundary of all the southern coast of the land occupied by the Israelites beyond Jordan; and the mountains of Hermon were the boundaries on the north. Arnon takes its rise in the mountains of Gilead, and having run a long way from north to south falls into the Dead Sea, near the same place into which Jordan discharges itself.

*And all the plain on the east* All the land from the plains of Moab to Mount Hermon.

**Verse 2. From Aroer** Aroer was situated on the western side of the river Arnon, in the middle of the valley through which this river takes its course. The kingdom of Sihon extended from the river Arnon and the city of Aroer on the south to the river Jabbok on the north.

*And from half Gilead* The mountains of Gilead extended from north to south from Mount Hermon towards the source of the river Arnon, which was about the midst of the extent of the kingdom of Sihon: thus Sihon is said to have possessed the half of Gilead, that is, the half of the mountains and of the country which bore the name of Gilead on the east of his territories. River Jabbok This river has its source in the mountains of Gilead; and, running from east to west, falls into Jordan. It bounds the territories of Sihon on the north, and those of the Ammonites on the south.

**Verse 3. The sea of Chinneroth** Or Gennesareth, the same as the lake or sea of Tiberias.

*The Salt Sea on the east* ים המלח yam hammelach, which is here

Melach. Where can we find any thing that can be called a salt sea on the east of the lake of Gennesareth? Some think that the lake Asphaltites, called also the Dead Sea, Sea of the Desert, Sea of Sodom, and Salt Sea, is here intended. Beth-jeshimoth A city near the Dead Sea in the plains of Moab.

*Ashdoth-pisgah* Supposed to be a city at the foot of Mount Pisgah.

**Verse 4. Coast of Og king of Bashan** Concerning this person see the notes on Deuteronomy 3:11, and on Numbers 21:35, etc.

*The remnant or the giants* Or, Rephaim. See the notes on Genesis 6:4; 14:5, and Deuteronomy 2:7, 11.

**Verse 5. The border of the Geshurites** The country of Bashan, in the days of Moses and Joshua, extended from the river Jabbok on the south to the frontiers of the Geshurites and Maachathites on the north, to the foot of the mountains of Hermon.

**Verse 7. From Baal-gad** A repetition of what is mentioned Joshua 11:17.

**Verse 9. The king of Jericho**, etc. On this and the following verses see the notes on Joshua 10:1-3.

**Verse 13. The king of Geder** Probably the same with Gedor, Joshua 15:58; it was situated in the tribe of Judah.

**Verse 14. The king of Hormah** Supposed to be the place where the Israelites were defeated by the Canaanites see Numbers 14:45; and which probably was called Hormah, **הַרְמָה** chormah, or destruction, from this circumstance.

**Verse 15. Adullam** A city belonging to the tribe of Judah, Joshua 15:35. In a cave at this place David often secreted himself during his persecution by Saul; 1 Samuel 22:1.

**Verse 17. Tappuah** There were two places of this name: one in the tribe of Judah, Joshua 15:34, and another in the tribe of Ephraim on the borders of Manasseh; but which of the two is meant here cannot be ascertained. See the note on Joshua 15:53.

**Hepher** The same, according to Calmet, as Ophrah in the tribe of Benjamin, Joshua 18:23.

**Verse 18. Aphek** There were several cities of this name: one in the tribe of Asher, Joshua 19:30, another in the tribe of Judah, 1 Samuel 4:1; 29:1; and a third in Syria, 1 Kings 20:26, and 2 Kings 13:17. Which of the two former is here intended cannot be ascertained.

**Lasharon** There is no city of this name known. Some consider the ל lamed in the word לשרו lashsharon to be the sign of the genitive case, and in this sense it appears to have been understood by the Vulgate, which translates rex Saron, the king of Sharon. This was rather a district than a city, and is celebrated in the Scriptures for its fertility; Isaiah 33:9; 35:2. Some suppose it was the same with Saron, near Lydda, mentioned Acts 9:35.

**Verse 20. Shimron-meron** See on Joshua 11:1.

**Verse 21. Taanach** A city in the half tribe of Manasseh, to the west of Jordan, not far from the frontiers of Zebulun, Joshua 17:11. This city was assigned to the Levites, Joshua 21:25.

**Verse 22. Kedesh** There was a city of this name in the tribe of Naphtali, Joshua 19:37. It was given to the Levites, and was one of the cities of refuge, Joshua 20:7.

**Jokneam of Carmel** This city is said to have been at the foot of Mount Carmel, near the river Belus, in the tribe of Zebulun, Joshua 19:11. It was given to the Levites, Joshua 21:34.

**Verse 23. The king of Dor** The city of this name fell to the lot of the children of Manasseh, Joshua 17:11. Bochart observes that it was one of the oldest royal cities in Phoenicia. The Canaanites held it, Judges 1:27. Antiochus Sydetes besieged it in aftertimes, but could not make himself master of it. See Bochart, Canaan, lib. i., c. 28, and Dodd.

**The king of the nations of Gilgal** This is supposed to mean the higher Galilee, surnamed Galilee of the Gentiles or, nations, as the Hebrew word גוים goyim means. On this ground it should be read king of Galilee of the nations. Others suppose it is the same country with that of which Tidal



was king, see Genesis 14:1. The place is very uncertain, and commentators have rendered it more so by their conjectures.

**Verse 24. *King of Tirzah*** This city appears to have been for a long time the capital of the kingdom of Israel, and the residence of its kings. See 1 Kings 14:17; 15:21, 33. Its situation cannot be exactly ascertained; but it is supposed to have been situated on a mountain about three leagues south of Samaria.

All the kings thirty and one. The Septuagint say **εικοσι εννεα**, twenty-nine, and yet set down but twenty-eight, as they confound or omit the kings of Beth-el, Lasharon, and Madon. So many kings in so small a territory, shows that their kingdoms must have been very small indeed. The kings of Beth-el and Ai had but about 12, 000 subjects in the whole; but in ancient times all kings had very small territories. Every village or town had its chief; and this chief was independent of his neighbors, and exercised regal power in his own district. In reading all ancient histories, as well as the Bible, this circumstance must be kept constantly in view; for we ought to consider that in those times both kings and kingdoms were but a faint resemblance of those now. Great Britain, in ancient times, was divided into many kingdoms: in the time of the Saxons it was divided into seven, hence called the Saxon heptarchy. But when Julius Caesar first entered this island, he found four kings in Kent alone; Cingetorix, Carnilius, Taximagulus, and Segonax. Hence we need not wonder at the numbers we read of in the land of Canaan. Ancient Gaul was thus divided; and the great number of sovereign princes, secular bishops, landgraves, dukes, etc., etc., in Germany, are the modern remains of those ancient divisions.

## CHAPTER 13

*Joshua being old, the Lord informs him of the land yet remaining to be possessed, 1. Of the unconquered land among the Philistines, 2, 3. Among the Canaanites, Sidonians, and Amorites, 4, 5. The inhabitants of the hill country and the Sidonians to be driven out, 6. The land on the east side of Jordan, that was to be divided among the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 7-12. The Geshurites and the Maachathites not expelled, 13. The tribe of Levi receive no inheritance, 14. The possessions of REUBEN described, 15-23. The possessions of GAD, 24-28. The possessions of the half tribe of Manasseh, 29-31. Recapitulation of the subjects contained in this chapter, 32, 33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. Joshua was old** He is generally reputed to have been at this time about a hundred years of age: he had spent about seven years in the conquest of the land, and is supposed to have employed about one year in dividing it; and he died about ten years after, aged one hundred and ten years. It is very likely that he intended to subdue the whole land before he made the division of it among the tribes; but God did not think proper to have this done. So unfaithful were the Israelites that he appears to have purposed that some of the ancient inhabitants should still remain to keep them in check, and that the respective tribes should have some labor to drive out from their allotted borders the remains of the Canaanitish nations.

*There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.* That is, very much when compared with that on the other side Jordan, which was all that could as yet be said to be in the hands of the Israelites.

**Verse 2. The borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri** The borders of the Philistines may mean the land which they possessed on the sea-coast, southwest of the land of Canaan. There were several places named Geshuri, but that spoken of here was probably the region on the south of

Canaan, towards Arabia, or towards Egypt. — Calmet. Cellarius supposes it to have been a country in the vicinity of the Amalekites.

**Verse 3. *From Sihor, which is before Egypt*** Supposed by some to be the Pelusiatic branch of the Nile, near to the Arabian Desert; called also the river of Egypt, Numbers 34:5; Jeremiah 2:18. On this subject an intelligent friend favors me with the following opinion: — “The river Sihor is supposed by some to be the Nile, or a branch of it. Others think it the same as what is frequently called the river of Egypt, which lay before or towards the borders of Egypt; which arose out of the mountains of Paran, and ran westward, falling into that bay of the Mediterranean which lies south of the land of the Philistines. This river is often mentioned as the boundary of the Israelites to the southwest, as Euphrates, the great river, was on the northeast. “There was a desert of considerable distance between what is called the river of Egypt and the isthmus of Suez. Solomon reigned to the borders of Egypt, i.e., to this desert; but not in Egypt, nor to the river Nile. “Upon the whole, (though there are difficulties in the matter,) I incline to think that the river in question was not the Nile. Sihor (black) might, from some circumstances, be applied to another river as well as the Nile; though some places in Isaiah and Jeremiah seem to restrict it to the Nile.” -J. C.

***Ekron northward*** Ekron was one of the five lordships of the Philistines, and the most northern of all the districts they possessed. Baal-zebub, its idol, is famous in Scripture; see 2 Kings 1:2, etc. The five lordships of the Philistines were Gaza, Ashdod, Askalon, Gath, and Ekron. There is no proof that ever the Israelites possessed Ekron; though, from Joshua 15:11, some think it was originally given to Judah, but the text does not say so; it only states that the border of the tribe of Judah went out UNTO THE SIDE of Ekron. From Joshua 19:43, we learn that it was a part of the lot of Dan, but it does not appear to have been possessed by any of those tribes. Counted to the Canaanite It is generally allowed that the original possessors of this country were the descendants of Canaan, the youngest son of Ham. The Philistines sprang from Mizraim, the second son of Ham, and, having dispossessed the Avim from the places they held in this land, dwelt in their stead. See Genesis 10:13, 14.

**Five lords of the Philistines** These dynasties are famous in the Scriptures for their successful wars against the Israelites, of whom they were almost the perpetual scourge.

**Also the Avites** These must not be confounded with the Hivites. The Avites seem to have been a very inconsiderable tribe, who dwelt in some of the skirts of Palestine. They had been originally deprived of their country by the Caphtorim; and though they lived as a distinct people, they had never afterwards arrived to any authority.

**Verse 4. The land of the Canaanites** This lay on the south of the country of the Philistines, towards the sea-coast.

**Mearah** Supposed to be the city Maratha, on the Mediterranean Sea. — Calmet. Or the river Majora, which falls into the Mediterranean Sea, between Sidon and Berytus. See PLINY, Hist. Nat. lib. v., c. 20.

**Aphek** See on Joshua 12:18.

**To the borders of the Amorites** Though the term Amorite is sometimes used to designate the inhabitants in general of the land of Canaan, yet it must be considered in a much more restricted sense in this place. As no Amorites are known to have dwelt in this quarter, Calmet supposes we should read Aramites or Syrians. Joshua, says he, proceeds from Sidon to Aphek, a city of Syria, between Heliopolis and Babylon where was the temple of the Venus of Aphek, and which is spoken of in 1 Kings 20:26; 2 Kings 13:17, as the capital of the kings of Syria. From this Joshua passes on to the frontiers of the Syrians, towards Gebal or Gabala, which, according to Ptolemy, was situated in Phoenicia. This conjecture of Calmet is not supported by any authority either from the ancient versions or MSS. Houbigant, however, approves of it: the emendation is simple as it consists in the interchange of only two letters in the same word, **הארמי** haarammi, for **האמרי** haemori.

**Verse 5. The land of the Gblites** This people dwelt beyond the precincts of the land of Canaan, on the east of Tyre and Sidon. See Ezekiel 27:9; Psalm 83:7; their capital was named Gebal. See Dodd.

**All Lebanon** See on Joshua 11:17.

**Verse 6. *Misrephoth-maim*** See on Joshua 11:7.

***These will I drive out*** That is, if the Israelites continued to be obedient; but they did not, and therefore they never fully possessed the whole of that land which, on this condition alone, God had promised them: the Sidonians were never expelled by the Israelites, and were only brought into a state of comparative subjection in the days of David and Solomon. Some have taken upon them to deny the authenticity of Divine revelation relative to this business, “because,” say they, “God is stated to have absolutely promised that Joshua should conquer the whole land, and put the Israelites in possession of it.” This is a total mistake. 1. God never absolutely, i.e., unconditionally, promised to put them in possession of this land. The promise of their possessing the whole was suspended on their fidelity to God. They were not faithful, and therefore God was not bound by his promise to give them any part of the land, after their first act of national defection from his worship. 2. God never said that Joshua should conquer the whole land, and give it to them; the promise was simply this: “Thou shalt bring them into the land, and thou shalt divide it among them:” both of which he did, and procured them footing by his conquests, sufficient to have enabled them to establish themselves in it for ever. 3. It was never said, Thou shalt conquer it all, and then divide it; no. Several of the tribes, after their quota was allotted them, were obliged to drive out the ancient inhabitants. See on Joshua 11:18.

**Verse 7. *The nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh*** The other half tribe of Manasseh, and the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, had got their inheritance on the other side of Jordan, in the land formerly belonging to Og king of Bashan, and Sihon king of the Amorites.

**Verse 9. *From Aroer*** See on Joshua 12:2.

**Verse 11. *Border of the Geshurites*** See on Joshua 12:5.

**Verse 17. *Bamoth-baal*** The high places of Baal, probably so called from altars erected on hills for the impure worship of this Canaanitish Priapus.

**Verse 18. *Jahaza*** A city near Medeba and Dibon. It was given to the Levites, 1 Chronicles 6:78. Kedemoth Mentioned Deuteronomy 2:26; supposed to have been situated beyond the river Arnon. Mephaath

Situated on the frontiers of Moab, on the eastern part of the desert. It was given to the Levites, Joshua 21:37.

**Verse 19. *Kirjathaim*** This city, according to Eusebius, was nine miles distant from Medeba, towards the east. It passed from the Emim to the Moabites, from the Moabites to the Amorites, and from the Amorites to the Israelites, Genesis 14:6; Deuteronomy 2:20. Calmet supposes the Reubenites possessed it till the time they were carried away by the Assyrians; and then the Moabites appear to have taken possession of it anew, as he collects from Jeremiah 48:1 etc., and Ezekiel 25:9 etc. Sibmah A place remarkable for its vines. See Isaiah 16:8, 9, Jeremiah 48:32. Zareth-shahar, in the mount of the valley This probably means a town situated on or near to a hill in some flat country.

**Verse 20. *Beth-peor*** The house or temple of Peor, situated at the foot of the mountain of the same name. See Numbers 25:3.

**Verse 21. *The princes of Midian*** See the history of this war, Numbers 31:1, etc.; and from that place this and the following verse seem to be borrowed, for the introduction of the death of Balaam here seems quite irrelevant.

**Verse 23. *The cities and the villages*** By villages, חֲצֵרִים chatserim, it is likely that moveable villages or tents are meant, such as are in use among the Bedouin Arabs; places where they were accustomed to feed and pen their cattle.

**Verse 25. *Half the land on the children of Ammon*** This probably was land which had been taken from the Ammonites by Sihon, king of the Amorites, and which the Israelites possessed by right of conquest. For although the Israelites were forbidden to take the land of the Ammonites, Deuteronomy 2:37, yet this part, as having been united to the territories of Sihon, they might possess when they defeated that king and subdued his kingdom.

**Verse 26. *Ramath-mizpeh*** The same as Ramoth-gilead. It was one of the cities of refuge, Joshua 20:8; Deuteronomy 4:47. Mahanaim Or the two camps. Situated on the northern side of the brook Jabbok, celebrated for the vision of the two camps of angels which Jacob had there; see Genesis 32:2.

**Verse 27. *Beth-aram*** This city was rebuilt by Herod, and called Livias, in honor of Livia, the wife of Augustus. Josephus calls it Julias, Julia being the name which the Greeks commonly give to Livia. — Calmet. Succoth A place between Jabbok and Jordan where Jacob pitched his tents, from

## CHAPTER 14

*Eleazar, Joshua, and the heads of the fathers, distribute the land by lot to the people, 1-3. The Levites receive no land, but cities to dwell in, and suburbs for their cattle, 4, 5. Caleb requests to have Mount Hebron for an inheritance, because of his former services, 6-12. Joshua grants his request, 13-15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 1. *Eleazar the priest*, etc.** ELEAZAR, as being the minister of GOD in sacred things is mentioned first. JOSHUA, AS having the supreme command in all things civil, is mentioned next. And the HEADS or PRINCES of the twelve tribes, who in all things acted under Joshua, are mentioned last. These heads or princes were twelve, Joshua and Eleazar included; and the reader may find their names in Numbers 34:19-28. It is worthy of remark that no prince was taken from the tribes of Reuben and Gad, because these had already received their inheritance on the other side of Jordan, and therefore could not be interested in this division.

**Verse 2. *By lot was their inheritance*** Concerning the meaning and use of the lot, see the note on Numbers 36:55; and concerning the manner of casting lots in the case of the scapegoat, see the note on Leviticus 16:8, 9. On this subject Dr. Dodd has selected some good observations from Calmet and Masius, which I here borrow: "Though God had sufficiently pointed out by the predictions of Jacob when dying, and those of Moses, what portions he designed for each tribe, we readily discern an admirable proof of his wisdom in the orders he gave to decide them by lot. By this means the false interpretations which might have been given to the words of Jacob and Moses were prevented; and by striking at the root of whatever might occasion jealousies and disputes among the tribes, he evidently secured the honesty of those who were to be appointed to distribute to them the conquered countries in the land of Canaan. Besides, the success of this method gave a fresh proof of the Divinity of the Jewish religion, and the truth of its oracles. Each tribe finding itself placed by lot



exactly in the spot which Jacob and Moses had foretold, it was evident that Providence had equally directed both those predictions and that lot. The event justified the truth of the promises. The more singular it was, the more clearly we discern the finger of God in it. The portion, says Masius, fell to each tribe just as Jacob had declared two hundred and fifty years before in the last moments of his life, and Moses, immediately before his death; for to the tribe of JUDAH fell a country abounding in vineyards and pastures; to ZEBULUN and ISSACHAR, seacoasts; in that of ASHER was plenty of oil, wheat, and metals; that of BENJAMIN, near to the temple, was, in a manner, between the shoulders of the Deity; EPHRAIM and MANASSEH were distinguished with a territory blessed in a peculiar manner by Heaven; the land of NAPHTALI extended from the west to the south of the tribe of Judah. Since therefore the lot so well corresponded to these predictions, would it not be insolence and stupidity in the highest degree, not to acknowledge the inspiration of God in the word of Jacob and Moses, the direction of his hand in the lot, and his providence in the event?" How the lot was cast in this case cannot be particularly determined. It is probable, 1. That the land was geographically divided into ten portions. 2. That each portion was called by a particular name. 3. That the name of each portion was written on a separate slip of parchment, wood, etc. 4. That the names of the claimants were also written on so many slips. 5. The names of the portions, and of the tribes, were put into separate vessels. 6. Joshua, for example, put his hand into the vessel containing the names of the tribes, and took out one slip; while Eleazar took out one from the other vessel, in which the names of the portions were put. 7. The name drawn, and the portion drawn, being read, it was immediately discerned what the district was which God had designed for such a tribe. This appears to be the most easy way to determine such a business.

**Verse 4. *The children of Joseph were two tribes*** This was ascertained by the prophetic declaration of their grandfather Jacob, Genesis 48:5, 6; and as Levi was taken out of the tribes for the service of the sanctuary, one of these sons of Joseph came in his place, and Joseph was treated as the first-born of Jacob, in the place of Reuben, who forfeited his right of primogeniture.

***With their suburbs for their cattle*** For the meaning of this passage the reader is referred to the note on Numbers 35:6.

**Verse 5. *They divided the land.*** This work was begun some time before at Gilgal, and was finished some time after at Shiloh. It must have required a very considerable time to make all the geographical arrangements that were necessary for this purpose.

**Verse 6. *Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite*** In the note on the parallel place, Numbers 32:12, it is said Kenaz was probably the father of Jephunneh, and that Jephunneh not Caleb, was the Kenezite; but still, allowing this to be perfectly correct, Caleb might also be called the Kenezite, as it appears to have been a family name, for Othniel, his nephew and son-in-law, is called the son of Kenaz, Joshua 15:17; Judges 1:13, and 1 Chronicles 4:13; and a grandson of Caleb is also called the son of Kenaz, 1 Chronicles 4:15. In 1 Chronicles 2:18, Caleb is called the son of Hezron, but this is only to be understood of his having Hezron for one of his ancestors; and son here may be considered the same as descendant; for Hezron, of the tribe of Judah, having come into Egypt one hundred and seventy-six years before the birth of Caleb, it is not at all likely that he could be called his father in the proper sense of the term. Besides, the supposition above makes a very good sense, and is consistent with the use of the terms father, son, and brother, in different parts of the sacred writings. Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said In the place to which Caleb seems to refer, viz., Numbers 14:24, there is not a word concerning a promise of Hebron to him and his posterity; nor in the place (Deuteronomy 1:36) where Moses repeats what had been done at Kadesh-barnea: but it may be included in what is there spoken. God promises, because he had another spirit within him, and had followed God fully, therefore he should enter into the land whereinto he came, and his seed should possess it. Probably this relates to Hebron, and was so understood by all parties at that time. This seems tolerably evident from the pointed reference made by Caleb to this transaction.

**Verse 7. *As it was in mine heart.*** Neither fear nor favor influenced him on the occasion; he told what he believed to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

**Verse 9. *The land whereon thy feet have trodden*** This probably refers to Hebron, which was no doubt mentioned on this occasion.

**Verse 10. *These forty and five years*** See the note on Joshua 13:1.

**Verse 11. *Even so is my strength now*** I do not ask this place because I wish to sit down now, and take my ease; on the contrary, I know I must fight, to drive out the Anakim, and I am as able and willing to do it as I was forty-five years ago, when Moses sent me to spy out the land.

**Verse 12. *I shall be able to drive them out*** He cannot mean Hebron merely, for that had been taken before by Joshua; but in the request of Caleb doubtless all the circumjacent country was comprised, in many parts of which the Anakim were still in considerable force. It has been conjectured that Hebron itself had again fallen under the power of its former possessors, who, taking the advantage of the absence of the Israelitish army, who were employed in other parts of the country, re-entered the city, and restored their ancient domination. But the first opinion seems best founded.

**Verse 13. *Joshua blessed him*** As the word bless often signifies to speak good or well of or to any person, (see the note on Genesis 2:3,) here it may mean the praise bestowed on Caleb's intrepidity and faithfulness by Joshua, as well as a prayer to God that he might have prosperity in all things; and especially that the Lord might be with him, as himself had expressed in the preceding verse.

**Verse 14. *Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb*** Joshua admitted his claim, recognized his right, and made a full conveyance of Hebron and its dependencies to Caleb and his posterity; and this being done in the sight of all the elders of Israel, the right was publicly acknowledged, and consequently this portion was excepted from the general determination by lot; God having long before made the cession of this place to him and to his descendants.

**Verse 15. *And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba*** That is, the city of Arba, or rather, the city of the four, for thus קִרְיַת אַרְבַּע kiryath arba may be literally translated. It is very likely that this city had its name from four Anakim, gigantic or powerful men, probably brothers, who built or conquered it. This conjecture receives considerable strength from Joshua

15:14, where it is said that Caleb drove from Hebron the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi: now it is quite possible that Hebron had its former name, Kirjath-arba, the city of the four, from these three sons and their father, who, being men of uncommon stature or abilities, had rendered themselves famous by acts proportioned to their strength and influence in the country. It appears however from Joshua 15:13 that Arba was a proper name, as there he is called the father of Anak. The Septuagint call Hebron the metropolis of the Enakim, *μητροπολις των ενακιμ*. It was probably the seat of government, being the residence of the above chiefs, from whose conjoint authority and power it might have been called *חבר* chebron; as the word *חבר* chabar literally signifies to associate, to join in fellowship, and appears to be used, Job 41:6, for “associated merchants, or merchants’ companions, who traveled in the same caravan.” Both these names are expressive, and serve to confirm the above conjecture. No notice need be taken of the tradition that this city was called the city of the four because it was the burial-place of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such traditions confute themselves.

*The land had rest from war.* There were no more general wars; the inhabitants of Canaan collectively could make no longer any head, and when their confederacy was broken by the conquests of Joshua, he thought proper to divide the land, and let each tribe expel the ancient inhabitants that might still remain in its own territories. Hence the wars after this time were particular wars; there were no more general campaigns, as it was no longer necessary for the whole Israelitish body to act against an enemy now disjointed and broken. This appears to be the most rational meaning of the words, The land had rest from war. THE Jewish economy furnishes, not only a history of God’s revelations to man, but also a history of his providence, and an ample, most luminous, and glorious comment on that providence. Is it possible that any man can seriously and considerately sit down to the reading even of this book, without rising up a wiser and a better man? This is the true history which everywhere exhibits God as the first mover and prime agent, and men only as subordinate actors. What a miracle of God’s power, wisdom, grace, justice, and providence are the people of Israel in every period of their history, and in every land of their dispersions! If their fall occasioned the salvation of the Gentile world, what shall their restoration produce! Their future

inheritance is not left to what men would call the fortuitous decision of a lot; like Caleb's possession it is confirmed by the oath of the Lord; and when the end shall be, this people shall stand in their lot at the end of the days, and shall again be great to the ends of the earth.

## CHAPTER 15

*The lot of the tribe of Judah described, 1. Their south border, 2-4. Their east border, 5-11. Their west border, 12. Caleb's conquest, 13-15. Promises his daughter to the person who should take Kirjath-sepher, 16. Othniel his kinsman renders himself master of it, and gets Achsah to wife, 17. Her request to her father to get a well watered land, which is granted, 18, 19. The cities of the tribe of Judah are enumerated, 20-63.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1. *This then was the lot of the tribe of-Judah*** The geography of the sacred writings presents many difficulties, occasioned by the changes which the civil state of the promised land has undergone, especially for the last two thousand years. Many of the ancient towns and villages have had their names so totally changed, that their former appellations are no longer discernible; several lie buried under their own ruins, and others have been so long destroyed that not one vestige of them remains. On these accounts it is very difficult to ascertain the situation of many of the places mentioned in this and the following chapters. But however this may embarrass the commentator, it cannot affect the truth of the narrative. Some of the principal cities in the universe, cities that were the seats of the most powerful empires, are not only reduced to ruins, but so completely blotted out of the map of the world that their situation cannot be ascertained. Where is Babylon? Where are Nineveh, Carthage, Thebes, Tyre, Baalbec, Palmyra, and the so far-famed and greatly celebrated TROY? Of the former and the latter, so renowned by historians and poets, scarcely a vestige, properly speaking, remains; nor can the learned agree on the spot once occupied by the buildings of those celebrated cities! Should this circumstance invalidate the whole history of the ancient world, in which they made so conspicuous a figure? And can the authenticity of our sacred historian be impaired, because several of the places he mentions no longer exist? Surely no: nor can it be called in question but by the heedless and superficial, or the decidedly profane. Although some of the cities of the holy land are destroyed, and it would be difficult to ascertain the

geography of several, yet enough remain, either under their ancient names, or with such decisive characteristics, that through their new names their ancient appellatives are readily discernible. It is natural to suppose that the division mentioned here was made after an accurate survey of the land, which might have been made by proper persons accompanying the conquering army of the Israelites. Nine tribes and a half were yet to be accommodated, and the land must be divided into nine parts and a half. This was no doubt done with the utmost judgment and discretion, the advantages and disadvantages of each division being carefully balanced. These were the portions which were divided by lot; and it appears that Judah drew the first lot; and, because of the importance and pre-eminence of this tribe, this lot is first described.

***By their families*** It is supposed that the family divisions were not determined by lot. These were left to the prudence and judgment of Joshua, Eleazar, and the ten princes, who appointed to each family a district in proportion to its number, etc., the general division being that alone which was determined by the lot.

***To the border of Edom*** The tribe of Judah occupied the most southerly part of the land of Canaan. Its limits extended from the extremity of the Dead Sea southward, along Idumea, possibly by the desert of Sin, and proceeding from east to west to the Mediterranean Sea, and the most eastern branch of the river Nile, or to what is called the river of Egypt. Calmet very properly remarks, that Joshua is particular in giving the limits of this tribe, as being the first, the most numerous, most important; that which was to furnish the kings of Judea; that in which pure religion was to be preserved, and that from which the Messiah was to spring.

***Verse 2. From the bay that looketh southward*** These were the southern limits of the tribe of Judah, which commenced at the extremity of the lake Asphaltites or Dead Sea, and terminated at Sihor or the river of Egypt, and Mediterranean Sea; though some think it extended to the Nile.

***Verse 3. Maaleh-acrabbim*** The ascent of the Mount of Scorpions, probably so called from the multitude of those animals found in that place.

***Kadesh-barnea*** This place was called Enmishpat, Genesis 14:7. It was on the edge of the wilderness of Paran, and about twenty-four miles from

Hebron. Here Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, died; and here Moses and Aaron rebelled against the Lord; hence the place was called Meribah-Kadesh, or the contention of Kadesh.

**Karkaa** Supposed to be the Coracea of Ptolemy, in Arabia Petraea. — Calmet.

**Verse 4. *Toward Azmon*** This was the last city they possessed toward Egypt.

***The river of Egypt*** The most eastern branch of the river Nile. See on Joshua 13:3. But there is much reason to doubt whether any branch of the Nile be meant, and whether the promised land extended to that river. On this subject it is impossible to decide either way.

**Verse 5. *The east border was the Salt Sea*** The Salt Sea is the same as the Dead Sea, lake Asphaltites, etc. And here it is intimated that the eastern border of the tribe of Judah extended along the Dead Sea, from its lowest extremity to the end of Jordan, i.e., to the place where Jordan falls into this sea.

**Verse 6. *Beth-hogla*** A place between Jericho and the Dead Sea, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, Joshua 18:21, though here serving as a frontier to the tribe of Judah.

***Stone of Bohan*** This must have been some remarkable place, probably like the stone of Jacob, which afterwards became Bethel; but where it was situated is uncertain.

**Verse 7. *The valley of Achor*** Debir mentioned in this verse is unknown. The valley of Achor had its name from the punishment of Achan. See the account, Joshua 7:24, etc.

***En-shemesh*** The fountain of the sun; it was eastward of Jerusalem, on the confines of Judah and Benjamin.

**Verse 8. *The valley of the son of Hinnom*** Who Hinnom was is not known, nor why this was called his valley. It was situated on the east of Jerusalem; and is often mentioned in Scripture. The image of the idol Molech appears to have been set up there; and there the idolatrous Israelites caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire in honor



of that demon, 2 Kings 23:10. It was also called Tophet, see Jeremiah 7:32. When King Josiah removed the image of this idol from this valley, it appears to have been held in such universal execration, that it became the general receptacle of all the filth and impurities which were carried out of Jerusalem; and it is supposed that continual fires were there kept up, to consume those impurities and prevent infection. From the Hebrew words **גֵי בֶן הִנּוֹם** *gei ben Hinnom*, the valley of the son of Hinnom, and by contraction, **גֵי הִנּוֹם** *gei Hinnom*, the valley of Hinnom, came the **γεεννα**, Gehenna of the New Testament, called also **γεεννα του πυρος**, the Gehenna of fire, which is the emblem of hell, or the place of the damned. See Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9, etc. In the East it is common to add the name of the father to that of the son, e.g., “This land belongs to Goborka the son of Kake Prusada.” But this addition is not made till after the father’s death. This custom prevailed also in the west. It is common among the aborigines of both Ireland and Wales.

***The same is Jerusalem*** This city was formerly called Jebus; a part of it was in the tribe of Benjamin; Zion, called its citadel, was in the tribe of Judah.

***The valley of the giants*** Of the Rephaim. See the notes on Genesis 6:4; 14:5; Deuteronomy 2:7, 11. On this subject, a very intelligent clergyman favors me with his opinion in the following terms: — “The boundary between Judah and Benjamin went up from the valley of Hinnom on the east to the top of the hill southward, leaving Jebusi (or Jerusalem) to the northwest adjoining to Benjamin. This mount (Jebusi) lay between the two tribes, which the Jebusites possessed till the time of David. At the 63d verse here, {Joshua 15:63} it is said Judah could not drive out these people; and in Judges 1:21, the same is said of the Benjamites. Each tribe might have attacked them at various times. There were various mounts or tops to these hills. Mount Zion and Moriah, where the temple stood, was in the tribe of Judah; Psalm 78:68, 69; 87:2. “In Deuteronomy 33:12 it is said of Benjamin, the Lord shall dwell by him, i.e., near him, or beside his borders, between his shoulders; the line might be circular between the two hills or tops so as in part to encompass Mount Zion in the tribe of Judah, on which the temple stood. Benjamin’s gate, (mentioned Jeremiah 37:12, 13; 38:7,) was the gate leading out of the city, into the tribe of Benjamin. So the gate of Ephraim, (2 Kings 14:13,) was a gate which led towards the

tribe of Ephraim. We give names to roads, etc., in the same way now. "Mount Calvary, (which was on the outside of the gate,) seems to have been in the tribe of Benjamin. Query. Whether Calvary or Golgotha was so called from skulls being scattered about there, (as say some,) or rather from the figure of the rock being shaped like a man's skull, with one face of it nearly perpendicular? I incline to this latter opinion. I believe the Jews did not suffer human bones, even of malefactors, to lie about." -J. C.

**Verse 9. *Baalath, which is Kirjath-jearim*** This place was rendered famous in Scripture, in consequence of its being the residence of the ark, for twenty years after it was sent back by the Philistines; see 1 Samuel 5:1-7:2.

**Verse 10. *Beth-shemesh*** The house or temple of the sun. It is evident that the sun was an object of adoration among the Canaanites; and hence fountains, hills, etc., were dedicated to him. Beth-shemesh is remarkable for the slaughter of its inhabitants, in consequence of their prying curiously, if not impiously, into the ark of the Lord, when sent back by the Philistines. See 1 Samuel 6:19.

**Verse 12. *The great sea*** The Mediterranean.

**Verse 13. *And unto Caleb-he gave a part*** See the notes on Joshua 14:14, etc.

**Verse 14. *The three sons of Anak*** See on Joshua 14:15.

**Verse 15. *Kirjath-sepher***. The city of the book. Why so named is uncertain. It was also called Debir, and Kirjath-sannah. See Joshua 15:49.

**Verse 16. *Will I give Achsah my daughter*** In ancient times fathers assumed an absolute right over their children, especially in disposing of them in marriage; and it was customary for a king or great man to promise his daughter in marriage to him who should take a city, kill an enemy, etc. So Saul promised his daughter in marriage to him who should kill Goliath, 1 Samuel 17:25; and Caleb offers his on this occasion to him who should take Kirjath-sepher. Profane writers furnish many similar examples.

**Verse 18. *As she came*** As she was now departing from the house of her father to go to that of her husband.

**She moved him** Othniel, to ask of her father a field, one on which she had set her heart, as contiguous to the patrimony already granted.

**She lighted off her ass** וַתִּצְנַח vattitsnach, she hastily, suddenly alighted, as if she had forgotten something, or was about to return to her father's house. Which being perceived by her father, he said, What wouldest thou? What is the matter? What dost thou want?

**Verse 19. Give me a blessing** Do me an act of kindness. Grant me a particular request.

**Thou hast given me a south land** Which was probably dry, or very ill, watered.

**Give me also springs of water.** Let me have some fields in which there are brooks or wells already digged.

**The upper springs, and the nether springs.** He gave her even more than she requested; he gave her a district among the mountains and another in the plains well situated and well watered. There are several difficulties in this account, with which I shall not trouble the reader. What is mentioned above appears to be the sense.

**Verse 24. Ziph** There were two cities of this name in the tribe of Judah, that mentioned here, and another Joshua 15:55. One of these two is noted for the refuge of David when persecuted by Saul; and the attempts made by its inhabitants to deliver him into the hands of his persecutor. See 1 Samuel 23:14-24.

**Verse 28. Beer-sheba** A city, famous in the book of Genesis as the residence of the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, Joshua 22:19; 28:10; 46:1. See the note on Genesis 21:31. It lay on the way between Canaan and Egypt, about forty miles from Jerusalem.

**Verse 30. Hormah** A place rendered famous by the defeat of the Hebrews by the Canaanites. See Numbers 14:45, Deuteronomy 1:44.

**Verse 31. Ziklag** The Philistines seem to have kept possession of this city till the time of David, who received it from Achish, king of Gath, 1 Samuel 27:6; after which time it remained in the possession of the kings of Judah.

**Verse 32. *All the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages*** But on a careful examination we shall find thirty-eight; but it is supposed that nine of these are excepted; viz., Beersheba, Moladah, Hazarshual, Baalah, Azem, Hormah, Ziklag, Ain, and Rimmon, which were afterwards given to the tribe of Simeon. This may appear satisfactory, but perhaps the truth will be found to be this: Several cities in the promised land are expressed by compound terms; not knowing the places, different translations combine what should be separated, and in many cases separate what should be combined. Through this we have cities formed out of epithets. On this ground we have thirty-eight cities as the sum here, instead of twenty-nine.

**Verse 33. *Eshtaol, and Zoreah*** Here Samson was buried, it being the burial-place of his fathers; see Judges 16:31. These places though first given to Judah, afterwards fell to the lot of Dan, Joshua 19:41.

**Verse 35. *Jarmuth*** See the note on Joshua 10:3.

***Adullam*** See the note on Joshua 12:15.

***Socoh*** It was near this place that David fought with and slew Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, 1 Samuel 17:1.

**Verse 36. *Gederah*** See the note on Joshua 12:13.

***Fourteen cities*** Well reckoned, we shall find fifteen cities here; but probably Gederah and Gederothaim (Joshua 15:36) are the same. See the note on Joshua 15:32.

**Verse 39. *Lachish-and Eglon*** See on Joshua 10:3.

**Verse 41. *Beth-dagon*** The house or temple of Dagon. This is a well known idol of the Philistines, and probably the place mentioned here was in some part of their territories; but the situation at present is unknown.

**Verse 42. *Libnah*** See the note on Joshua 10:29.

***Ether*** From Joshua 19:7 we learn that this city was afterwards given to the tribe of Simeon.

**Verse 44. *Keilah*** This town was near Hebron, and is said to have been the burying-place of the prophet Habakkuk. David obliged the Philistines

to raise the siege of it; (see 1 Samuel 23:1-13;) but finding that its inhabitants had purposed to deliver him into the hands of Saul, who was coming in pursuit of him, he made his escape. See this remarkable case explained in the note on Deuteronomy 32:15.

**Mareshah** Called also Maresheth and Marasthi; it was the birth-place of the prophet Micah. Near this place was the famous battle between Asa, king of Judah, and Zera, king of Cush or Ethiopia, who was at the head of one thousand thousand men, and three hundred chariots. Asa defeated this immense host and took much spoil, 2 Chronicles 14:9-15.

**Verse 46. Ekron** One of the five Philistine lordships; see the note on Joshua 13:3.

**Verse 47. Ashdod** Called also Azotus, Acts 8:40.

**Unto the river of Egypt** The Pelusiac branch of the Nile, or Sihor. But see on Joshua 15:4.

**The great sea** The Mediterranean.

**Verse 48. Socoh** See a town of this name, Joshua 15:35.

**Verse 49. Kirjath-sannah** See the note on Joshua 15:15.

**Verse 51. Goshen** See the note on Joshua 10:41.

**Giloh** The country of the traitor Ahithophel, 2 Samuel 15:12.

**Verse 53. Beth-tappuah** The house of the apple or citron tree. Probably a place where these grew in great abundance and perfection.

**Aphekah** See the note on Joshua 12:18.

**Verse 54. Kirjath-arba** See the note on Joshua 14:15.

**Verse 55. Maon** In a desert to which this town gave name, David took refuge for a considerable time from the persecution of Saul; and in this place Nabal the Carmelite had great possessions. See 1 Samuel 23:24, 25; 25:2.

**Carmel** Not the celebrated mount of that name, but a village, the residence of Nabal. See 1 Samuel 25:2. It was near Maon, mentioned above, and was

about ten miles eastward of Hebron. It is the place where Saul erected a trophy to himself after the defeat of the Amalekites; see 1 Samuel 15:12.

**Ziph** See on Joshua 15:24.

**Verse 57. Timnah** A frontier town of the Philistines; it was in this place that Samson got his wife, see Judges 14:1-15:20.

**Verse 58. Gedor** See the note on Joshua 12:13. In this place the Alexandrian MS. of the Septuagint and the Codex Vaticanus add the eleven following towns: Theca, and Ephratha, (that is, Bethlehem,) and Phagor, and Etan, and Kulon, and Tatam, and Thebes, and Karam, and Galam, and Thether, and Manoch; eleven cities and their villages. St. Jerome, on Micah 5:1, mentions them, so that we find they were in the copies he used. Dr. Kennicott contends that they should be restored to the text, and accounts thus for their omission: “The same word **והצרייה** vechatsreyhen, and their villages. occurring immediately before this passage and at the end of it, the transcriber’s eye passed from one to the other by mistake. A similar accident has caused the omission of two whole verses, the 35th and 36th of Joshua 21.” See the note there. {Joshua 21:35, 36}

**Verse 60. Kirjath-baal** The same as Baalah. See on Joshua 15:9.

**Verse 62. The city of Salt Or of Melach.** *This city was somewhere in the vicinity of the lake Asphaltites, the waters of which are the saltiest perhaps in the world. The whole country abounds with salt: see the note on Genesis 19:25. Some suppose that it is the same as Zoar, the place to which Lot escaped after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

**En-gedi** The well of the kid: it was situated between Jericho and the lake of Sodom or Dead Sea.

**Verse 63. The Jebusites dwell-at Jerusalem unto this day.** The whole history of Jerusalem, previously to the time of David, is encumbered with many difficulties. Sometimes it is attributed to Judah, sometimes to Benjamin, and it is probable that, being on the frontiers of both those tribes, each possessed a part of it. If the Jebusites were ever driven out before the time of David, it is certain they recovered it again, or at least a part of it-what is called the citadel or strong hold of Zion, (see 2 Samuel

5:7,) which he took from them; after which the city fell wholly into the hands of the Israelites. This verse is an additional proof that the book of Joshua was not written after the times of the Jewish kings, as some have endeavored to prove; for when this verse was written, the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah, which they did not after the days of David; therefore the book was written before there were any kings in Judea. IT is very likely, not only that many cities have by the lapse of time changed their names or been totally destroyed, (see the note on Joshua 15:1,) but that the names of those in the preceding catalogue have been changed also, several of them repeated that should have been mentioned but once, and not a few confounded with the terms by which they are described. But we must not suppose that every repetition of the name is through the carelessness of copyists; for there are often two places which bear the same name, which is frequently the case in England. But besides this, villages are mentioned as being apparently in the tribe of Judah, which afterwards appear to have been in an other tribe. The reason appears to be this: many towns are mentioned which were frontier towns, and when the limits of a tribe are pointed out, such places must necessarily be mentioned, though allotted to a different tribe. This consideration will serve to remove several difficulties which occur in the reading of this and the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 16

*Borders of the children of Joseph, 1-4. The borders of the Ephraimites, 5-9. The Canaanites dwell tributary among them, 10.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 1. *The children of Joseph*** Ephraim and Manasseh, and their descendants. The limits of the tribe of Ephraim extended along the borders of Benjamin and Dan, from Jordan on the east to the Mediterranean on the west.

**Verse 2. *From Bethel to Luz*** From Genesis 28:19 it appears that the place which Jacob called Beth-el was formerly called Luz; see the note there: but here they seem to be two distinct places. It is very likely that the place where Jacob had the vision was not in Luz, but in some place within a small distance of that city or village, (see the note on Genesis 28:12,) and that sometimes the whole place was called Beth-el, at other times Luz, and sometimes, as in the case above, the two places were distinguished. As we find the term London comprises, not only London, but also the city of Westminster and the borough of Southwark; though at other times all three are distinctly mentioned.

***Archi to Ataroth*** Archi was the country of Hushai, the friend of David, 2 Samuel 15:32, who is called Hushai the Archite. Ataroth, called Ataroth-addar, Ataroth the illustrious, Joshua 16:5, and simply Ataroth, Joshua 16:7, is supposed to have been about fifteen miles from Jerusalem.

**Verse 3. *Beth-horon the nether*** This city was about twelve miles from Jerusalem, on the side of Nicopolis, formerly Emmaus. — CALMET. See the note on Joshua 10:10.

**Verse 5. *Ataroth-addar*** See the note on Joshua 16:2.

***Beth-horon the upper*** The situation of this town is little known. It was eastward of Beth-horon the nether, and consequently not far from it.



**Verse 8. *Tappuah*** This was a city in the tribe of Manasseh, and gave name to a certain district called the land of Tappuah. See Joshua 17:8.

***The sea*** The Mediterranean, as before.

**Verse 9. *And the separate cities*** That is, the cities that were separated from the tribe of Manasseh to be given to Ephraim; see Joshua 17:9.

**Verse 10. *The Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer*** It appears that the Canaanites were not expelled from this city till the days of Solomon, when it was taken by the king of Egypt his father-in-law, who made it a present to his daughter, Solomon's queen. See 1 Kings 9:16. And see the note on Joshua 10:33. The Ephraimites, however, had so far succeeded in subjecting these people as to oblige them to pay tribute, though they could not, or at least did not, totally expel them. OF the names and places in this chapter, we may say the same as of others already mentioned. See the note on Joshua 15:1. Many of those towns were small, and, we may rationally conclude, slightly built, and consequently have perished perhaps more than a thousand years ago. It would be therefore useless to look for such places now. Several of the towns in England, a land not exposed to such revolutions as that of Palestine has ever been, mentioned by Caesar and other ancient writers, are no longer discernible. Several have changed their names, and not a few their situation. Tradition states that the city of Norwich anciently stood some miles from its present situation; and we have the fullest proof that this was the case with the city of Salisbury. Such changes do not affect the truth of the ancient geography of our own country; nor can they impeach that of the sacred historian before us.

## CHAPTER 17

*The lot of the half tribe of Manasseh, 1, 2. Case of the daughters of Zelophehad, 34. The borders of Manasseh described, 7-11. The Canaanites dwell among them, but are laid under tribute, 12, 13. The children of Joseph complain of the scantiness of their lot, 14-16. Joshua authorizes them to possess the mountainous wood country of the Perizzites, and gives them encouragement to expel them, though they were strong and had chariots of iron, 17, 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 1. *There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh*** It was necessary to mark this because Jacob, in his blessing, (Genesis 48:19, 20), did in a certain sense set Ephraim before Manasseh, though the latter was the first-born; but the place here shows that this preference did not affect the rights of primogeniture.

***For Machir-because he was a man of war*** It is not likely that Machir himself was now alive; if he were, he must have been nearly 200 years old: It is therefore probable that what is spoken here is spoken of his children, who now possessed the lot that was originally designed for their father, who it appears had signalized himself as a man of skill and valor in some of the former wars, though the circumstances are not marked. His descendants, being of a warlike, intrepid spirit, were well qualified to defend a frontier country, which would be naturally exposed to invasion.

**Verse 2. *The rest of the children of Manasseh*** That is, his grandchildren; for it is contended that Manasseh had no other son than Machir; and these were very probably the children of Gilead, the son of Machir.

**Verse 3. *Zelophehad-had no sons, but daughters*** See this case considered at large in the notes on Numbers 27:1-7; 36:1, etc.

**Verse 5. *There fell ten portions to Manasseh*** The Hebrew word חבלִי chabley, which we translate portions, signifies literally cords or cables, and intimates that by means of a cord, cable, or what we call a chain, the land

was divided. We have but little account of the arts and sciences of the Hebrews, yet from the sketches which we find in different parts of the Old Testament it appears that their minds were in many respects well cultivated; nor could the division, which is mentioned in this book, have been made without such a measure of geographical knowledge, as we find it difficult to grant them. Suppose even in this case, the land was not measured with a chain, which in some cases would have been impracticable, because the ancient inhabitants still occupied the places which were allotted to certain tribes or families; yet the allusion to this mode of measurement shows that it was well known among them. As there were six sons and five daughters, among whom this division was to be made, there should be eleven portions; but Zelophehad, son of Hopher, having left five daughters in his place, neither he nor Hopher is reckoned. The lot of Manasseh therefore was divided into ten parts; five for the five sons of Gilead, who were Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, and Shemida; and five for the five daughters of Zelophehad, viz., Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. CALMET.

**Verse 9. *Unto the river Kanah*** Literally, the river or valley of the reeds, translated by the Vulgate, vallis arundintei. The tribe of Manasseh appears to have been bounded on the north by this torrent or valley, and on the south by the Mediterranean Sea.

**Verse 10. *They met together in Asher on the north*** The tribe of Asher extended from the Mediterranean Sea to Mount Carmel, Joshua 19:26, and the tribe of Manasseh extended to Dor and her towns, (see the following verse,) which were in the vicinity of Carmel; and thus it appears that these two tribes formed a junction at the Mediterranean Sea. This may serve to remove the difficulties in this verse; but still it does appear that in several cases the tribes were intermingled; for Manasseh had several towns, both in Issachar and in Asher, see Joshua 17:11. In like manner, Judah had towns in Dan and Simeon; and Simeon had towns in Judah; and what is spoken of the boundaries of the tribes, may be sometimes understood of those towns which certain tribes had within the limits of others. For, in several cases, towns seem to be interchanged, or purchased, by mutual consent, so that in some instances the possessions were intermingled, without any confusion of the tribes or families.

**Verse 11. *Beth-shean*** Called afterwards Scythopolis; the city of the Scythians or Cuthites, those who were sent into the different Samaritan cities by the kings of Assyria.

**Dor** On the Mediterranean Sea, about eight miles from Caesarea, on the road to Tyre

**En-dor** The well or fountain of Dor, the place where Saul went to consult the witch; 1 Samuel 28:7, etc.

**Verse 12. *Could not drive out, etc.*** They had neither grace nor courage to go against their enemies, and chose rather to share their territories with those whom the justice of God had proscribed, than exert themselves to expel them. But some commentators give a different turn to this expression, and translate the passage thus: But the children of Manasseh could not (resolve) to destroy those cities, but the Canaanites consented to dwell in the land. And as they were willing to pay tribute, and the others chose to tolerate them on those terms, they agreed to dwell together: but this paying of tribute seems not to have taken place till some time after, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, etc.

**Verse 15. *If thou be a great people*** Joshua takes them at their own word; they said, Joshua 17:14, that they were a great people; then said he, If thou be a great people or seeing thou art a great people, go to the wood country, and clear away for thyself. Joshua would not reverse the decision of the lot; but as there was much woodland country, he gave them permission to clear away as much of it as they found necessary to extend themselves as far as they pleased.

**Verse 16. *The hill is not enough for us*** The mountain of Gilboa being that which had fallen to them by lot.

**Chariots of iron** We cannot possess the plain country, because that is occupied by the Canaanites; and we cannot conquer them, because they have chariots of iron, that is, very strong chariots, and armed with scythes, as is generally supposed.

**Verse 18. *The outgoings of it shall be thine*** Clear away the wood, occupy the mountain, and you shall soon be able to command all the valleys; and, possessing all the defiles of the country, you shall drive out

the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron: your situation will be advantageous, your numbers very respectable, and the hand of God will be upon you for good. 1. FROM the whole history of the Israelites we find that it was difficult to please them; they had a dissatisfied mind, and hence were rarely contented. From the above account we learn that the children of Joseph were much inclined to quarrel with Joshua, because they had not such a lot as they wished; though they could not be ignorant that their lot, as that of the others, had been determined by the especial providence of God. 2. Joshua treats them with great firmness; he would not attempt to alter the appointment of God, and he saw no reason to reverse or change the grant already made. They were both numerous and strong, and if they put forth their strength under the direction of even the ordinary providence of God, they had every reason to expect success. 3. Slothfulness is natural to man; it requires much training to induce him to labor for his daily bread; if God should miraculously send it he will wonder and eat it, and that is the whole. Strive to enter in at the strait gate is an ungracious word to many; they profess to trust in God's mercy, but labor not to enter into that rest: God will not reverse his purpose to meet their slothfulness; they alone who overcome shall sit with Jesus upon his throne. Reader, take unto thee the whole armor of God, that thou mayest be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all-to STAND. And remember, that he only who endures to the end shall be saved.

## CHAPTER 18

*The tabernacle is set up at Shiloh, 1. Seven of the tribes having not yet received their inheritance, 2. Joshua orders three men from each tribe to be chosen, and sent to examine the land and divide it into seven parts, which should be distributed among them by lot, 3-7. The men go and do as commanded, and return to Joshua, 8, 9. Joshua casts lots for them, 10. The lot of Benjamin, how situated, 11. Its northern boundaries, 12-14. Its southern boundaries, 15-19. Its eastern boundary, 20. Its cities, 21-28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1. *Israel assembled together at Shiloh*** This appears to have been a considerable town about fifteen miles from Jerusalem, in the tribe of Ephraim, and nearly in the center of the whole land. To this place both the camp of Israel, and the ark of the Lord, were removed from Gilgal, after a residence there of seven years. Here the tabernacle remained one hundred and thirty years, as is generally supposed, being the most conveniently situated for access to the different tribes, and for safety, the Israelites having possession of the land on all sides; for it is here added, the land was subdued before them—the Canaanites were so completely subdued, that there was no longer any general resistance to the Israelitish arms.

**Verse 3. *How long are ye slack to go to possess the land*** We find an unaccountable backwardness in this people to enter on the inheritance which God had given them! They had so long been supported by miracle, without any exertions of their own, that they found it difficult to shake themselves from their inactivity. When it was necessary that all the people should go out to battle, they went with a measure of confidence, expecting miraculous help from God, and confiding in their numbers, but when each tribe found it necessary to fight for itself, in order to its establishment and the extension of its borders, it was discouraged, and chose rather a life of inglorious ease than the possession of an inheritance which would cost it much labor to conquer.

**Verse 4. *Three men for each tribe*** Probably meaning only three from each of the seven tribes who had not yet received their inheritance. It is likely that these twenty-one men were accompanied by a military guard, for without this they might have been easily cut off by straggling parties of the Canaanites.

***They shall-describe it*** It is likely they were persons well acquainted with geography and mensuration, without which it would have been impossible for them to have divided the land in the way necessary on this occasion.

**Verse 5. *Judah shall abide-on the south, and the house of Joseph-on the north.*** Joshua does not mean that the tribe of Judah occupied the south, and the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh the north of the promised land; this was not the fact: but being now at Shiloh, a considerable way in the territory of Ephraim, and not far from that of Judah, he speaks of them in relation to the place in which he then was. Calmet considers him as thus addressing the deputies: “Go and examine the whole of the country which remains yet to be possessed; do not take into consideration the tribe of Judah, which is on the south, nor the tribe of Ephraim, which is on the north of where we now are, but carefully divide the remaining land which is not occupied by these tribes into seven equal parts.” This makes a very good sense, and frees the place from embarrassment.

**Verse 7. *The priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance*** We have already seen that the priests and Levites had the sacrifices, oblations tithes, first-fruits, redemption-money of the firstborn, etc., for their inheritance; they had no landed possessions in Israel; the LORD was their portion.

**Verse 9. *And described it in a book*** This as far as I can recollect, is the first act of surveying on record. These men and their work differed widely from those who had searched the land in the time of Moses; they went only to discover the nature of the country, and the state of its inhabitants; but these went to take an actual geographical survey of it, in order to divide it among the tribes which had not yet received their portions. We may suppose that the country was exactly described in a book, that is, a map, pointing out the face of the country, accompanied with descriptions of each part.

**Verse 11. *And the lot-of Benjamin came up*** On the manner of casting the lot, see on Joshua 14:2, and Numbers 26:55. There were probably two urns, one of which contained the names of the seven tribes, and the other that of the seven portions. They therefore took out one name out of the first urn, and one portion out of the second, and thus the portion was adjudged to that tribe.

**Verse 12. *The wilderness of Beth-aven.*** This was the same as Beth-el; but this name was not given to it till Jeroboam had fixed one of his golden calves there. Its first name signifies the house of God; its second, the house of iniquity.

**Verse 16. *To the side of Jebusi*** The mountain of Zion, that was near Jerusalem; for Jebusi, or Jebus, was the ancient name of this city.

**Verse 17. *En-shemesh*** The fountain of the sun; a proof of the idolatrous nature of the ancient inhabitants of this land.

***Geliloth*** As the word signifies borders or limits, it is probably not the proper name of a place: And went forth towards the BORDERS which are over against the ascent to Adummim.

**Verse 19. *The north bay of the Salt Sea*** As the word **לֶשׁוֹן** leshon signifies the tongue, it may here refer to the point of the Dead or Salt Sea. Of these tongues or points it had two, one on the north, and the other on the south.

**Verse 21. *Now the cities*** Some of these cities have been mentioned before, and described; of others we know nothing but the name.

**Verse 24. *And Gaba*** Supposed to be the same as Gibeah of Saul, a place famous for having given birth to the first king of Israel; and infamous for the shocking act towards the Levite's wife, mentioned Judges 19:16-30, which was the cause of a war in which the tribe of Benjamin was nearly exterminated. Judges 20:29-48.

**Verse 25. *Gibeon*** See before, Joshua 10:1-14. This place is famous for the confederacy of the five kings against Israel, and their miraculous defeat. Ramah, a place about six or eight miles north of Jerusalem. Beeroth, i.e.,



wells; one of the four cities which belonged to the Gibeonites, who made peace with the Israelites by stratagem. See Joshua 9:3-15.

**Verse 26. *And Mizpeh*** This place is celebrated in the sacred writings. Here the people were accustomed to assemble often in the presence of the Lord, as in the deliberation concerning the punishment to be inflicted on the men of Gibeah, for the abuse of the Levite's wife. Judges 20:1-3. Samuel assembled the people here to exhort them to renounce their idolatry, 1 Samuel 7:5, 6. In this same place Saul was chosen to be king, 1 Samuel 10:17. It was deemed a sacred place among the Israelites; for we find, from 1Mac 3:46, that the Jews assembled here to seek God, when their enemies were in possession of the temple.

**Verse 28. *And Zelah*** This was the burying-place of Saul, Jonathan, and the family of Kish. See 2 Samuel 21:14.

***Jebusi, which is Jerusalem*** We often meet with this name, and it is evident that it was the ancient name of Jerusalem, which was also called Salem; and was probably the place in which Melchizedek reigned in the days of Abraham; though some think a different place is meant; for that there was another place of the same name, is evident from John 3:23. This place, called Salim by the evangelist, is said to be near to Enon, and there John baptized, because there was much water in the place. This, however, must not be confounded with the Salem mentioned above; for that this was a name of Jerusalem, is evident from Psalm 76:1, 2: In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In SALEM also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. This must refer to Jerusalem, where the temple was situated. Whether Jebus or Jebusi had its name from the Jebusites, or the Jebusites from it, cannot be ascertained.

## CHAPTER 19

*The lot of Simeon, 1-9. Of Zebulun, 10-16. Of Issachar, 17-23. Of Asher, 24-31. Of Naphtali, 32-39. Of Dan, 40-48. Joshua's portion, 49, 50. The conclusion of the division of the land, 51.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 1. *The second lot came forth to Simeon*** In this appointment the providence of God may be especially remarked. For the iniquitous conduct of Simeon and Levi, in the massacre of the innocent Shechemites, Genesis 34:25-31, Jacob, in the spirit of prophecy, foretold that they should be divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel, Genesis 49:7. And this was most literally fulfilled in the manner in which God disposed of both these tribes afterwards. Levi was scattered through all Palestine, not having received any inheritance, only cities to dwell in, in different parts of the land; and Simeon was dispersed in Judah, with what could scarcely be said to be their own, or a peculiar lot. See the note on Genesis 49:7.

**Verse 2. *Beer-sheba*** The well of the oath. See the note on Genesis 21:31.

**Verse 3. *Hazar-shual*** For this and several of the following places, see the notes on Joshua 15:32.

**Verse 5. *Beth-marcaboth*** The house or city of chariots. Probably a place where their war-chariots and cavalry were laid up.

**Verse 6. *Beth-lebaoth*** The house or city of lionesses. Probably so called from the numbers of those animals which bred there.

**Verse 8. *Baalath-beer*** The well of the mistresses. Probably so called from some superstitious or impure worship set up there.

**Verse 13. *Gittah-hepher*** The same as Gath-hepher, the birth-place of the prophet Jonah.

**Verse 15. *Shimron*** See on Joshua 12:20.

***Beth-lehem*** The house of bread; a different place from that in which our Lord was born.

**Verse 17. *The fourth lot came out to Issachar*** It is remarkable, that though Issachar was the eldest brother, yet the lot of Zebulun was drawn before his lot; and this is the order in which Jacob himself mentions them, Genesis 49:13, 14, though no reason appears, either here or in the place above, why this preference should be given to the younger; but that the apparently fortuitous lot should have distinguished them just as the prophetic Jacob did, is peculiarly remarkable. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning: he has reasons for his conduct, which in many cases are too great for any of his creatures to comprehend, but he works all things after the counsel of his own will, which is ever right and good; and in this case his influence may be as easily seen in the decision by the lot, as on the mind of the patriarch Jacob, when he predicted what should befall his children in the latter days, and his providence continued to ripen, and bring forward what his judgment had deemed right to be done.

**Verse 18. *Jezreel*** This city, according to Calmet, was situated in an open country, having the town of Legion on the west, Bethshan on the east, on the south the mountains of Gilboa, and on the north those of Hermon.

***Shunem*** This city was rendered famous by being the occasional abode of the prophet Elisha, and the place where he restored the son of a pious woman to life. 2 Kings 4:8. It was the place where the Philistines were encamped on that ruinous day in which the Israelites were totally routed at Gilboa, and Saul and his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, killed. 1 Samuel 28:4; 31:1, etc.

**Verse 22. *Beth-shemesh*** The house or temple of the sun; there were several cities or towns of this name in Palestine; an ample proof that the worship of this celestial luminary had generally prevailed in that idolatrous country.

**Verse 26. *Carmel*** The vineyard of God; a place greatly celebrated in Scripture, and especially for the miracles of Elijah; see 1 Kings 18:19-40. The mountain of Carmel was so very fruitful as to pass into a proverb. There was another Carmel in the tribe of Judah, (see Joshua 15:55,) but this, in the tribe of Asher, was situated about one hundred and twenty

furlongs south from Ptolemais, on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea. Calmet observes that there was, in the time of Vespasian, a temple on this mountain, dedicated to a god of the same name. There was a convent, and a religious order known by the name of Carmelites, established on this mountain in honor of Elijah: the time of the foundation of this order is greatly disputed. Some pretend that it was established by Elijah himself; while others, with more probability, fix it in A.D. 1180 or 1181, under the pontificate of Pope Alexander III.

**Verse 27. *Cabul on the left hand*** That is, to the north of Cabul, for so the left hand, when referring to place, is understood among the Hebrews. We must not confound this town or Cabul with the twenty cities given by Solomon to Hiram, with which he was displeased, and which in contempt he called the land of Cabul, the dirty or paltry land, 1 Kings 9:11-13: there was evidently a town of this name, widely different from the land so called, long before the time of Solomon, and therefore this cannot be adduced as an argument that the book of Joshua was written after the days of David. The town in question is supposed to be the same which Josephus in his Life calls χωβουλω Choboulo, and which he says was situated by the sea-side, and nigh to Ptolemais. Deuteronomy Bell. Jud., lib. iii., c. 4.

**Verse 28. *Unto great Zidon*** The city of Sidon and the Sidonians are celebrated from the remotest antiquity. They are frequently mentioned by Homer. See the note on Joshua 11:8.

**Verse 29. *The strong city Tyre*** I suspect this to be an improper translation. Perhaps the words of the original should be retained: And the coast turneth to Ramah and to the city, מִבְצָר צָר mibtsar tsor. Our translators have here left the Hebrew, and followed the Septuagint and Vulgate, a fault of which they are sometimes guilty. The former render the place εως πολεως οχυρωματος των τυριων, unto the fortified city of the Tyrians. The Vulgate is nearly the same: ad civitatem munitissimam Tyrum, to the well-fortified city Tyre; but this must be incorrect for the famous city of Tyre was not known till about A.M. 2760, about two hundred years after the days of Joshua. Homer, who frequently mentions Sidon and the Sidonians, never mentions Tyre; a proof that this afterwards very eminent city was not then known. Homer is allowed by some to have

flourished in the time of Joshua, though others make him contemporary with the Israelitish judges. The word צור Tsor or Tsar, which we translate or change into Tyre, signifies a rock or strong place; and as there were many rocks in the land of Judea, that with a little art were formed into strong places of defense, hence several places might have the name of Tsar or Tyre. The ancient and celebrated Tyre, so much spoken of both in sacred and profane history, was a rock or small island in the sea, about six or seven hundred paces from the main land. In order to reduce this city, Alexander the Great was obliged to fill up the channel between it and the main land, and after all took it with much difficulty. It is generally supposed that a town on the main land, opposite to this fortified rock, went by the same name; one being called old Tyre, the other, new Tyre: it was out of the ruins of the old Tyre, or that which was situated on the main land, that Alexander is said to have filled up the channel between it and the new city. Of this city Isaiah, Isaiah 23:1-18, and Ezekiel, Ezekiel 27:1-28:26, have given a very grand description, and also predicted its irreparable ruin which prophecies have been most literally fulfilled. See more on the above places.

**Achzib** Called afterwards Ecdippe, and now called Zib; it is about nine miles' distance from Ptolemais, towards Tyre.

**Verse 30. *Twenty and two cities*** There are nearly thirty cities in the above enumeration instead of twenty-two, but probably several are mentioned that were but frontier towns, and that did not belong to this tribe, their border only passing by such cities; and on this account, though they are named, yet they do not enter into the enumeration in this place. Perhaps some of the villages are named as well as the cities.

**Verse 34. *And to Judah upon Jordan*** It is certain that the tribe of Naphtali did not border on the east upon Judah, for there were several tribes betwixt them. Some think that as these two tribes were bounded by Jordan on the east, they might be considered as in some sort conjoined, because of the easy passage to each other by means of the river; but this might be said of several other tribes as well as of these. There is considerable difficulty in the text as it now stands; but if, with the Septuagint, we omit Judah, the difficulty vanishes, and the passage is plain: but this omission is supported by no MS. hitherto discovered. It is

however very probable that some change has taken place in the words of the text, **וּבִיהוּדָה הַיַּרְדֵּן** ubihudah haiyarden, “and by Judah upon Jordan.” Houbigant, who terms them verba sine re ac sententia, “words without sense or meaning,” proposes, instead of them, to read **הַיַּרְדֵּן וּבַגְּדוֹתַי** ubigdoth haiyarden, “and by the banks of Jordan;” a word which is used Joshua 3:15, and which here makes a very good sense.

**Verse 35. Chinnereth** See the note on Joshua 11:2.

**Verse 36. Hazor** See the note on Joshua 11:1.

**Verse 38. Nineteen cities** But if these cities be separately enumerated they amount to twenty-three; this is probably occasioned by reckoning frontier cities belonging to other tribes, which are only mentioned here as the boundaries of the tribe. See on Joshua 19:30.

**Verse 41. Zorah, and Eshtaol** See the note on Joshua 15:33.

**Ir-shemesh** The city of sun; another proof of the idolatry of the Canaanites. Some think this was the same as Beth-shemesh.

**Verse 42. Shaalabbin** The foxes. Of this city the Amorites kept constant possession. See Judges 1:35.

**Ajalon** There was a place of this name about two miles from Nicopolis or Emmaus, on the road to Jerusalem. — Calmet.

**Verse 43. Thimnathah** Probably the same as Timnah. See on Joshua 15:57.

**Ekron** A well-known city of the Philistines and the metropolis of one of their five dynasties,

**Verse 45. Jehud, and Bene-berak** Or Jehud of the children of Berak.

**Verse 46. Japho.** The place since called Joppa, lying on the Mediterranean, and the chief sea-port, in the possession of the twelve tribes.

**Verse 47. Went out too little for them** This is certainly the meaning of the passage; but our translators have been obliged to add the words too little to make this sense apparent. Houbigant contends that an ancient copyist,

meeting frequently with the words **וַיֵּצֵא הַגְּבוּל** vaiyetse haggebul, in the preceding history, became so familiarized to them that he wrote them here instead of **וַיֵּאָצֵּן הַגְּבוּל** vaiyaats haggebul, and the border of the children of Dan was STRAIT for them. It was on this account that they were obliged to go and fight against Leshem, and take and possess it, their former inheritance being too strait for their increasing population.

**And called Leshem, Dan** This city was situated near the origin of Jordan, at the utmost northern extremity of the promised land, as Beer-sheba was at that of the south; and as after its capture by the Danites it was called Dan, hence arose the expression from Dan even to Beer-sheba, which always signified the whole extent of the promised land. Some suppose that Leshem was the same with Caesarea Philippi, but others with reason reject this opinion. It must be granted that the whole account given in this verse refers indisputably to a fact which did not take place till after the death of Joshua. It is another of the marginal or explicative notes which were added by some later hand. The whole account of this expedition of the Danites against Leshem is circumstantially given in {Judges 18:1-29} the book of Judges, and to that chapter the reader is referred.

**Verse 50. Timnath-serah** Called Timnath-heres in Judges 2:9, where we find that the mountain on which it was built was called Gaash. It is generally allowed to have been a barren spot in a barren country.

**Verse 51. At the door of the tabernacle** All the inheritances were determined by lot, and this was cast before the Lord-every thing was done in his immediate presence, as under his eye; hence there was no murmuring, each having received his inheritance as from the hand of God himself, though some of them thought they must have additional territory, because of the great increase of their families.

## CHAPTER 20

*Joshua is commanded to appoint cities of refuge, 1, 2. The purpose of their institution, 34. Three cities are appointed in the promised land, 7; and three on the east side of Jordan, 8, 9.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 2. *Cities of refuge*** An institution of this kind was essentially necessary wherever the patriarchal law relative to the right of redemption and the avenging of blood was in force; we have already seen that the nearest of kin to a deceased person had not only the right of redeeming an inheritance that had been forfeited or alienated, but had also authority to slay on the spot the person who had slain his relative. Now, as a man might casually kill another against whom he had no ill-will, and with whom he had no quarrel, and might have his life taken away by him who was called the avenger of blood, though he had not forfeited his life to the law; therefore these privileged cities were appointed, where the person might have protection till the cause had been fully heard by the magistrates, who certainly had authority to deliver him up to the avenger, if they found, on examination, that he was not entitled to this protection. On this subject see the notes on Numbers 35:11 to the end.

**Verse 7. *They appointed Kedesh in Galilee*** The cities of refuge were distributed through the land at proper distances from each other that they might be convenient to every part of the land; and it is said they were situated on eminences, that they might be easily seen at a distance, the roads leading to them being broad, even, and always kept in good repair. In the concluding note on Numbers 35:33 it has been stated that these cities were a type of our blessed Lord, and that the apostle refers to them as such, Hebrews 6:17, 18. Hence their names have been considered as descriptive of some character or office of Christ. I shall give each and its signification, and leave the application to others. 1. קֶדֶשׁ KEDESH, from kadash, to separate or set apart, because it implies the consecration of a person or thing to the worship or service of God alone; hence to make or



be holy, and hence Kedesh, holiness, the full consecration of a person to God. 2. **שכם** SHECHEM, from shacham, to be ready, forward, and diligent; hence Shechem, the shoulder, because of its readiness to bear burdens, prop up, sustain, etc., and from this ideal meaning it has the metaphorical one of GOVERNMENT. 3. **חברו** chebron; HEBRON, from **חבר** chabar, to associate, join, conjoin, unite as friends; and hence chebron, fellowship, friendly association, or with the diminutive nun, the little fellow-ship or association. 4. **בצר** BEZER, from batsar, to restrain, enclose, shut up, or encompass with a wall; and hence the goods or treasure thus secured, and hence a fortified place, a fortress. 5. **ראמות** RAMOTH, from **ראם** raam, to be raised, made high or exalted, and hence Ramoth, high places, eminences. 6. **גול** GOLAN, from **גלה** galah, to remove, transmigrate, or pass away; hence Golan, a transmigration or passage. Some derive it from **גל** gal, to rejoice, hence GOLAN, rejoicing or exultation. A person of the spirit and turn of Origen could preach the whole Gospel from these particulars. Kedesh and Hebron were at the two extremities of the promised land; one was in Galilee, the other in the tribe of Judah, both in mountainous countries; and Shechem was in the tribe of Ephraim, nearly in the middle, between both. Bezer was on the east side of Jordan, in the plain, opposite to Jericho. Ramoth was about the midst of the country occupied by the two tribes and a half, about the middle of the mountains of Gilead. Golan was the capital of a district called Gaulonitis, in the land of Bashan, towards the southern extremity of the lot of Manasseh.

**Verse 9. For all the children of Israel, and for the stranger** As these typified the great provision which God was making for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles, hence the stranger as well as the Israelite had the same right to the benefits of these cities of refuge. Is HE the God of the Jews only? Is HE not also the God of the Gentiles?

**Until he stood before the congregation.** The judges and elders of the people, in trying civil and criminal causes, always sat; the persons who came for judgment, or who were tried, always stood; hence the expressions so frequent in Scripture, STANDING before the Lord, the judges, the elders, etc. It is worthy of remark that the cities of refuge were given to the LEVITES; see the following chapter. The sacrificial system alone afforded refuge; and while the suspected person was excluded from his family, etc.,

he had the advantage of being with those whose business it was to instruct the ignorant, and comfort the disconsolate. Thus he had the means constantly at hand, by a careful use of which he might grow wiser and better; secure the favor of his God, and a lot of blessedness in a better world. How wise, equal, and beneficent are all the institutions of God!

## CHAPTER 21

*The Levites apply to Eleazar, Joshua, and the elders, for the cities to dwell in which Moses had promised, 1, 2. Their request is granted, 3. The priests receive thirteen cities out of the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, 4. The Levites receive ten cities out of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 5; and thirteen out of the other half tribe of Manasseh, and the tribes of Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali, 6. The children of Merari had twelve cities out of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun, 7. The names of the cities given out of the tribes of Judah and Simeon, 8-16. Those granted out of the tribe of Benjamin, 17-19. Out of Ephraim, 20-22. Those out of Dan, 23, 24. Those out of both the halves of the tribe of Manasseh, 25-27. Those out of the tribe of Issachar, 28, 29. Those out of Asher, 30, 31. Those out of Naphtali, 32. These were the cities of the Gershonites, 33. The cities of the Merarites, 34-40. The sum of the cities given to the Levites, forty-eight, 41, 42. The exact fulfillment of all God's promises, 43-45.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 1. *The heads of the fathers of the Levites*** The Levites were composed of three brand families, the Gershonites, Koathites, and Merarites, independently of the family of Aaron, who might be said to form a fourth. To none of these had God assigned any portion in the division of the land. But in this general division it must have been evidently intended that the different tribes were to furnish them with habitations; and this was according to a positive command of God, Numbers 35:2, etc. Finding now that each tribe had its inheritance appointed to it, the heads of the Levites came before Eleazar, Joshua, and the chiefs of the tribes who had been employed in dividing the land, and requested that cities and suburbs should be granted them according to the Divine command.

**Verse 3. *And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites*** They cheerfully obeyed the Divine command, and cities for habitations were

appointed to them out of the different tribes by lot, that it might as fully appear that God designed them their habitations, as he designed the others their inheritances.

**Verse 4. *Out of the tribe of Judah-Simeon, and-Benjamin, thirteen cities.*** These tribes furnished more habitations to the Levites in proportion than any of the other tribes, because they possessed a more extensive inheritance; and Moses had commanded, Numbers 35:8, From them that have many, ye shall give many; and from them that have few, ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites, according to his inheritance. It is worthy of remark, that the principal part of this tribe, whose business was to minister at the sanctuary, which sanctuary was afterwards to be established in Jerusalem, had their appointment nearest to that city; so that they were always within reach of the sacred work which God had appointed them.

**Verse 5. *And the rest of the children of Kohath*** That is, the remaining part of that family that were not priests, for those who were priests had their lot in the preceding tribes. Those, therefore, of the family of Kohath, who were simply Levites, and not of the priests or Aaron's family, (see Joshua 21:10,) had their habitations in Ephraim, Dan, and the half tribe of Manasseh. It has been asked in what sense did the Levites possess those cities, seeing they had no inheritance? To which it may be answered that it is not likely the Levites had the exclusive property of the cities in which they dwelt, for it is evident that the other Israelites dwelt among them. We know, says Calmet, by history, that the cities of the Levites were almost entirely filled with Israelites of other tribes. For instance, Gibeah of Benjamin, which is here given to the Levites, Joshua 21:17, was always peopled by the Benjamites, as appears from the history of the Levite, whose wife was so horribly abused by them; Judges 19:22-27. Saul and all his family dwelt in the same city; and David and his court spent the first years of his reign at Hebron, which was also a city of the Levites, Joshua 21:10. It appears, therefore, that they had no other property in those cities than merely the right to certain houses, which they might sell, but always with the right of perpetual redemption, for they could finally alienate nothing; and if the possessor of such a house, having sold it, did not redeem it at the year of jubilee, it reverted to the Levites. And as to their lands for their cattle, which extended two thousand cubits without the

city, these they were not permitted to sell: they were considered as the Lord's property. See Leviticus 25:32-34, and the notes there. It is therefore very likely that, in the first instance, the Levites had simply the right to choose, in all the cities assigned them, the houses in which they were to dwell, and that those of the tribe to which the city belonged occupied all the other dwellings. There is also reason to believe that in process of time, when the families of the Levites increased, they had more dwellings assigned to them, which were probably built at the public expense. We may also observe that the Levites were not absolutely bound to live in these and no other cities: for when the tabernacle was at Nob, priests and Levites dwelt there, see 1 Samuel 21:1, etc.; and when the worship of God was established at Jerusalem, multitudes both of priests and Levites dwelt there, though it was no Levitical city: as did the courses of priests afterwards at Jericho. This was a circumstance which Moses had foreseen, and for which he had provided. See Deuteronomy 18:6, etc.

**Verse 11. *The city of Arba*** See the note on Joshua 14:15.

**Verse 12. *The fields of the city-gave they to Caleb*** This was an exclusive privilege to him and his family, with which the grant to the Levites did not interfere. See the notes on Joshua 14:14.

**Verse 18. *Anathoth***. Celebrated as the birthplace of Jeremiah, about three miles northward of Jerusalem, according to St. Jerome.

**Verse 19. *Thirteen cities with their suburbs***. At the time mentioned here certainly thirteen cities were too large a proportion for the priests, as they and their families amounted to a very small number: but this ample provision was made in reference to their great increase in after times, when they formed twenty-four courses, as in the days of David.

**Verse 22. *Beth-horon*** There were two cities of this name, the upper and the nether; but which is intended here, cannot be ascertained.

**Verse 24. *Aijalon*** See on Joshua 10:12.

**Verse 27. *Golan in Bashan*** On this and the other cities of refuge mentioned here, see the note on Joshua 20:7.

**Verse 35. *Dimnah with her suburbs, etc.*** It is well known to every Hebrew scholar that the two following verses are wholly omitted by the

Masora; and are left out in some of the most correct and authentic Hebrew Bibles. Between critics there is no small controversy relative to the authenticity of these verses; and those who wish to see the arguments at large on both sides, must consult the *Variae Lectiones* of Deuteronomy Rossi on this place. Dr. Kennicott, who is a strenuous advocate for their authenticity argues thus in their behalf: “Verses 41 and 42 of this chapter tell us that the Levitical cities were forty-eight, and that they had been all as such described; so that they must have been all specified in this chapter: whereas now in all the Hebrew copies printed in full obedience to the Masora, which excludes two verses containing four of these cities, the number amounts only to forty-four. “The cities are first mentioned, in the general, as being thirteen and ten, with thirteen and twelve, which are certainly forty-eight. And yet when they are particularly named, Joshua 21:13-19 gives thirteen cities; Joshua 21:20-26 gives ten cities; Joshua 21:27-33 gives thirteen; Joshua 21:34-36 gives four cities; and Joshua 21:35-36 gives four more, all which can make but forty-four. And what still increases the wonder is, that Joshua 21:40 infers from the verses immediately preceding, that the cities allowed to the Merarites were twelve, though they here make eight only, unless we admit the four other cities expressed in those two verses, which have been rejected by that blind guide the Masora. In defiance of this authority these two verses, thus absolutely necessary, were inserted in the most early editions of the Hebrew text, and are found in Walton’s Polyglot, as well as in our English Bible. But they have scarce ever been as yet printed completely, thus, And out of the tribe of Reuben, A CITY OF REFUGE FOR THE SLAYER, BEZER, IN THE WILDERNESS, with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs, Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities. See on this place my edition of the Hebrew Bible, where no less than one hundred and forty-nine copies are described, which happily preserve these verses, most clearly essential to the truth and consistency of this chapter. See also *General Discourse*, pp. 19, 26, 54.” Though this reasoning of Dr. Kennicott appears very conclusive, yet there are so many and important variations among the MSS. that retain, and those that reject these verses, as to render the question of their authenticity very difficult to be determined. To Dr. Kennicott’s one hundred and forty-nine MSS. which have these two verses, may be added upwards of forty collated by Deuteronomy Rossi. Those who deny their authenticity say they have

been inserted here from 1 Chronicles 6:78, 79, where they are found it is true, in general, but not exactly as they stand here, and in Dr. Kennicott's Hebrew Bible.

**Verse 36. *Jahazah*** See on Joshua 13:18.

**Verse 41. *Forty and eight cities*** At the last census of the Hebrew people, related Numbers 26, we find from Numbers 26:62 that the tribe of Levi amounted only to 23, 000; and it is supposed that forty-eight cities were too great a proportion for this tribe, the other tribes having so very few. But, 1. All the cities of the other tribes are not enumerated. 2. They had the circumjacent country as well as the cities. 3. The Levites had no other cities than those enumerated. 4. They had no country annexed to their cities, the 2, 000 cubits for their cattle, etc., excepted. 5. Cities in those ancient times were very small, as most villages went under this appellation. 6. The Levites had now the appointment that was suited to their consequent increase. The other tribes might enlarge their borders and make conquests, but this was not suitable to the mere servants of God; besides, had they made conquests, they would have become proprietors of the conquered land; and God determined that they should have no inheritance in Israel, HE himself being their portion.

**Verse 43. *And the Lord gave-all the land which he sware*** All was now divided by lot unto them, and their enemies were so completely discomfited that there was not a single army of the Canaanites remaining to make head against them; and those which were left in the land served under tribute, and the tribute that they paid was the amplest proof of their complete subjugation. Add to this, they had as much of the land in actual possession as they could occupy; and, as they increased, God enabled them to drive out the rest of the ancient inhabitants; but in consequence of the infidelity of the Israelites, God permitted their enemies often to straiten them, and sometimes to prevail against them. It should also be remembered, that God never promised to give them the land, or to maintain them in it, but on condition of obedience; and so punctually did he fulfill this intention, that there is not a single instance on record in which they were either straitened or subjugated, while obedient and faithful to their God. The cavil is as foolish as it is unprincipled which states, "The Israelites never did possess the whole of the land which was promised to

them, and therefore that promise could not come by Divine revelation.” With as much reason might it be urged that Great Britain has not subdued the French West India Islands and Batavia, (Feb. 1812,) because the ancient inhabitants still remain in them; but is not their serving under tribute an absolute proof that they are conquered, and under the British dominion? So was the whole land of Canaan conquered, and its inhabitants subdued, though the whole of the ground was not occupied by the Israelites till the days of David and Solomon. In the most correct and literal sense it might be said, There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel: all came to pass. Nor shall one word of his ever fail to any of his followers while the sun and moon endure.



## CHAPTER 22

*Joshua assembles, commends, blesses, and then dismisses the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 1-8. They return and build an altar by the side of Jordan, 9, 10. The rest of the Israelites hearing of this, and suspecting that they had built the altar for idolatrous purposes, or to make a schism in the national worship, prepare to go to war with them, 11, 12; but first send a deputation to know the truth, 13, 14. They arrive and expostulate with their brethren, 15-20. The Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, make a noble defense, and show that their altar was built as a monument only to prevent idolatry, 21-29. The deputation are satisfied, and return to the ten tribes and make their report, 30-32. The people rejoice and praise God, 33; and the Reubenites and Gadites call the altar they had raised Ed, that it might be considered a witness between them and their brethren on the other side Jordan, 34.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22

**Verse 1. *Then Joshua called the Reubenites, etc.*** We have already seen that 40, 000 men of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, had passed over Jordan armed, with their brethren, according to their stipulation with Moses. The war being now concluded, Joshua assembles these warriors, and with commendations for their services and fidelity, he dismisses them, having first given them the most pious and suitable advices. They had now been about seven years absent from their respective families; and though there was only the river Jordan between the camp at Gilgal and their own inheritance, yet it does not appear that they had during that time ever revisited their own home, which they might have done any time in the year, the harvest excepted, as at all other times that river was easily fordable.

**Verse 5. *But take diligent heed, etc.*** Let us examine the force of this excellent advice; they must ever consider that their prosperity and

continued possession of the land depended on their fidelity and obedience to God; to this they must take diligent heed.

***Do the commandment*** They must pay the strictest regard to every moral precept.

***And the law*** They must observe all the rites and ceremonies of their holy religion.

***Love the Lord your God*** Without an affectionate filial attachment to their Maker, duty would be irksome, grievous, and impossible.

***Walk in all his ways*** They must not only believe and love, but obey: walk not in your own ways, but walk in those which GOD has pointed out.

***Keep his commandments*** They must love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves.

***Cleave unto him*** They must be cemented to him, in a union that should never be dissolved.

***Serve him*** They must consider him as their Master, having an absolute right to appoint them when, where, how, and in what measure they should do his work.

***With all your heart*** Having all their affections and passions sanctified and united to him.

***And with all your soul.*** Giving up their whole life to him, and employing their understanding, judgment, and will, in the contemplation and adoration of his perfections; that their love and obedience might increase in proportion to the cultivation and improvement of their understanding.

***Verse 7. Then he blessed them*** Spoke respectfully of their fidelity and exertions, wished them every spiritual and temporal good, prayed to God to protect and save them, and probably gave some gifts to those leaders among them that had most distinguished themselves in this seven years' war. In all the above senses the word bless is frequently taken in Scripture.

**Verse 8. *Return with much riches*** It appears they had their full proportion of the spoils that were taken from the Canaanites, and that these spoils consisted in cattle, silver, gold, brass, iron, and raiment.

***Divide the spoil-with your brethren.*** It was right that those who stayed at home to defend the families of those who had been in the wars, and to cultivate the ground, should have a proper proportion of the spoils taken from the enemy, for had they not acted as they did the others could not have safely left their families.

**Verse 10. *The borders of Jordan, that are in-Canaan*** This verse can never mean that they built the altar on the west side of Jordan, for this was not in their territories; nor could it be a place for the purpose of public worship to their own people, if built on the opposite side of Jordan; besides, the next verse says it was built over against the land of Canaan. It appears that when they came to the river they formed the purpose of building the altar; and when they had crossed it they executed their purpose.

***A great altar to see to.*** A vast mass of earth, stones, etc., elevated to a great height, to serve as a memorial of the transactions that had already taken place. Probably it was intended also to serve as a kind of watchtower, being of a stupendous height, altare infinitae magnitudinis, an altar of an immense size, as the Vulgate terms it.

**Verse 12. *To go up to war against them.*** Supposing that they had built this altar in opposition to that which Moses, by the command of God, had erected, and were consequently become rebels against God and the Israelitish constitution, and should be treated as such. Their great concern for the glory of God led them to take this step, which at first view might appear precipitate; but, that they might do nothing rashly, they first sent Phinehas and ten princes, one out of each tribe, to require an explanation of their motives in erecting this altar.

**Verse 17. *Is the iniquity of Peor too little*** See this history, Numbers 25:3, etc., and the notes there. Phinehas takes it for granted that this altar was built in opposition to the altar of God erected by Moses, and that they intended to have a separate service, priesthood, etc., which would be rebellion against God, and bring down his curse on them and their

posterity; and, in order to show that God is jealous of his glory, he refers to the business of Baal Peor, which took place in that very country they were now about to possess, the destructive consequences of which he, through his zeal for the glory of God, was the means of preventing.

**Verse 19. *If the land of your possessions be unclean*** The generous mind of Phinehas led him to form this excuse for them. If ye suppose that this land is impure, as not having been originally included in the covenant, and ye think that ye cannot expect the blessing of God unless ye have an altar, sacrifices, etc., then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth, the only legitimate place where sacrifices and offerings can be made. We will divide this land with you, and rather straiten ourselves than that you should conceive yourselves to be under any necessity of erecting a new altar besides the altar of the Lord our God.

**Verse 20. *Did not Achan the son of Zerah*** Your sin will not be merely against yourselves; your transgressions will bring down the wrath of God upon all the people; this was the case in the transgression of Achan; he alone sinned, and yet God on that account turned his face against the whole congregation, so that they fell before their enemies. We cannot therefore be unconcerned spectators of your transgression, we may all be implicated in its criminality; let this and the dishonor which we apprehend is done to our God plead our excuse, and vindicate the necessity of the present warlike appearance which we make before you. See the history of Achan referred to here, (Joshua 7:11-26,) and the notes there.

**Verse 21. *Then the children of Reuben-answered*** Though conscious of their own innocency they permitted Phinehas to finish his discourse, though composed of little else than accusations; there was a decency in this, and such a full proof of good breeding, as does them the highest credit. There are many public assemblies in the present day which lay claim to the highest refinement, who might take a very useful lesson from these Reubenites and their associates.

**Verse 22. *The Lord God of gods*** The original words are exceedingly emphatic, and cannot be easily translated. **יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים** El Elohim Yehovah, are the three principal names by which the supreme God was known among the Hebrews, and may be thus translated, the strong God,

Elohim, Jehovah, which is nearly the version of Luther, *der starcte Gott der Herr*, “The strong God the LORD.” And the Reubenites, by using these in their very solemn appeal, expressed at once their strong unshaken faith in the God of Israel; and by this they fully showed the deputation from the ten tribes, that their religious creed had not been changed; and, in the succeeding part of their defense they show that their practice corresponded with their creed. The repetition of these solemn names by the Reubenites, etc., shows their deep concern for the honor of God, and their anxiety to wipe off the reproach which they consider cast on them by the supposition that they had been capable of defection from the pure worship of God, or of disaffection to their brethren.

***Save us not this day*** This was putting the affair to the most solemn issue; and nothing but the utmost consciousness of their own integrity could have induced them to make such an appeal, and call for such a decision. “Let God the Judge cause us to perish this day, if in principle or practice we have knowingly departed from him.”

**Verse 24. *For fear of this thing*** The motive that actuated us was directly the reverse of that of which we have been suspected.

**Verse 26. *An altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice*** Because this would have been in flat opposition to the law, Leviticus 17:8, 9;

against the WORD of the Lord, and thus ye have delivered the children of Israel from the hand of the WORD of the Lord.” They rejoice to find them innocent, and that there is no ground of quarrel between the children of the same family. And from this they draw a very favorable conclusion, that as God was among them as the sole object of their religious worship, so he would abide with them as their protector and their portion; and as they were his friends, they take it for granted that he will deliver them from the hands of their enemies.

**Verse 33. *And did not intend to go up against them in battle*** That is, they now relinquished the intention of going against them in battle, as this explanation proved there was no cause for the measure.

**Verse 34. *Called the altar Ed*** The word **עד** ED, which signifies witness or testimony, is not found in the common editions of the Hebrew Bible, and is supplied in Italics by our translators, at least in our modern copies; for in the first edition of this translation it stands in the text without any note of this kind; and it is found in several of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS., and also in the Syriac and Arabic. Several also of the early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible have the word **עד**, either in the text or in the margin, and it must be allowed to be necessary to complete the sense. It is very probable that an inscription was put on this altar, which pointed out the purposes for which it was erected. FROM the contents of this chapter we learn that the Israelites were dreadfully alarmed at the prospect of a schism in their own body, both as it related to ecclesiastical and civil matters. A few observations on this subject may not be useless. Schism in religion is a dangerous thing, and should be carefully avoided by all who fear God. But this word should be well understood. **σχισμα**, in theology, is generally allowed to signify a rent in, or departure from, the doctrine and practice of the apostles, especially among those who had been previously united in that doctrine and practice. A departure from human institutions in religion is no schism, for this reason that the WORD OF GOD alone is the sufficient rule of the faith and practice of Christians; and as to human institutions, forms, modes, etc., those of one party may be as good as those of another. When the majority of a nation agrees in some particular forms and modes in their religious service; no conscientious man will lightly depart from these; nor depart at all, unless he find that they are not only not authorized by the word of God, but

repugnant to it. It is an object greatly to be desired, that a whole people, living under the same laws may, as much as possible, glorify God, not only with one heart, but also with one mouth. But there may be a dissent from established forms without schism; for if that dissent make no rent in the doctrines or practice of Christianity, as laid down in the New Testament, it is an abuse of terms to call it a schism; besides, there may be a dissent among religious people relative to certain points both in creed and practice, which, not affecting the essentials of Christianity, nor having any direct tendency to alienate the affections of Christians from each other, cannot be called a schism; but when professing Christians separate from each other, to set up one needless or non-essential form, etc., in the place of others which they call needless or non-essential, they are highly culpable. This not only produces no good, but tends to much evil; for both parties, in order to make the points of their difference of sufficient consequence to justify their dissension, magnify these non-essential matters beyond all reason, and sometimes beyond conscience itself: and thus mint and cummin are tithed, while the weightier matters of the law-judgment and the love of God-are utterly neglected. If Christians either cannot or will not think alike on all points, surely they can agree to disagree, and let each go to heaven his own way. "But should we take this advice, would it not lead to a total indifference about religion?" Not at all; for in the things which concern the essentials of Christianity, both in doctrine and practice, we should ever feel zealously affected, and earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

## CHAPTER 23

*Joshua, being old, calls for the rulers and different heads of the Israelites, 1, 2, to whom he relates how God had put them in possession of the promised land, 3, 4; from which all their remaining enemies should be expelled, 5. Exhorts them to be faithful to God, and to avoid all connections with the idolatrous nations, 6-8. Encourages them with the strongest promises, that no enemy should ever be able to prevail against them, if they continued to love the Lord their God, 9-11. Lays also before them the consequences of disobedience, 12, 13. Shows them that as all God's promises had been fulfilled to them while they were obedient, so his threatening should be fulfilled on them if they revolted from his service; and that if they did so, they should be utterly destroyed from off the good land, 14-16.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 23

**Verse 1.** *A long time after that the Lord had given rest* This is supposed to have been in the last or one hundred and tenth year of the life of Joshua, about thirteen or fourteen years after the conquest of Canaan, and seven after the division of the land among the tribes.

**Verse 2.** *Joshua called for all Israel* There are four degrees of civil distinction mentioned here: 1. זְקֵנִים zekenim, the elders or senate, the PRINCES of the tribes. 2. רָאשִׁים rashim or rashey aboth, the CHIEFS or HEADS of families. 3. שֹׁפְטִים shophetim, the JUDGES who interpreted and decided according to the law. 4. שׂוֹטְרִים shoterim, the OFFICERS, serjeants, etc., who executed the decisions of the judges. Whether this assembly was held at Timnath-serah, where Joshua lived, or at Shiloh, where the ark was, or at Shechem, as in Joshua 24:1, we cannot tell. Some think that the meaning here, and that mentioned in Joshua 24:1, were the same, and if so, Shechem was the place of assembling; but it is more likely that the two chapters treat of two distinct assemblies, whether held at the same place or not.



**Verse 3. *For the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you.*** There is much both of piety and modesty in this address. It was natural for the Israelites to look on their veteran, worn-out general, who had led them on from conquest to conquest, with profound respect; and to be ready to say, “Had we not had such a commander, we had never got possession of this good land.” Joshua corrects this opinion, and shows them that all their enemies had been defeated, because the Lord their God had fought for them. That the battle was the Lord’s, and not his; and that God alone should have the glory.

**Verse 4. *I have divided-these nations that remain*** The whole of the promised land had been portioned out, as well those parts which had not yet been conquered, as those from which the ancient inhabitants had been expelled. The Canaanitish armies had long ago been broken in pieces, so that they could make no head against the Israelites, but in many districts the old inhabitants remained, more through the supineness of the Israelites, than through their own bravery.

***From Jordan-unto the great sea*** All the land that lay between the river Jordan, from Phiala, where it rose, to the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and to the Mediterranean Sea, through the whole extent of its coast, opposite to Jordan.

**Verse 5. *And drive them-out-and ye shall possess*** The same Hebrew word יָרַשׁ *yarash* is used here to signify to expel from an inheritance, and to succeed those thus expelled. Ye shall disinherit them from your sight, and ye shall inherit their land.

**Verse 6. *Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do, etc.*** It requires no small courage to keep a sound creed in the midst of scoffers, and not less to maintain a godly practice among the profane and profligate.

***That is written in the book*** By the word of God alone his followers are bound. Nothing is to be received as an article of faith which God has not spoken.

**Verse 7. *Come not among these nations*** Have no civil or social contracts with them, (see Joshua 23:12,) as these will infallibly lead to spiritual affinities, in consequence of which ye will make honorable mention of the name of their gods, swear by them as the judges of your motives and

actions, serve them in their abominable rites, and bow yourselves unto them as your creators and preservers; thus giving the whole worship of God to idols: and all this will follow from simply coming among them. He who walks in the counsel of the ungodly will soon stand in the way of sinners, and shortly sit in the seat of the scornful. *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.* “No man rises to the highest stages of iniquity but by degrees.” NERO himself, under the instructions of Seneca, was a promising youth.

**Verse 10. *One man of you shall chase a thousand*** Do not remain inactive on the supposition that you must be much more numerous before you can drive out your enemies, for it is the Lord that shall drive out nations great and strong; and under his direction and influence one of you shall chase a thousand.

**Verse 11. *Take good heed-unto yourselves that ye love the Lord***  
 לנפשתיכם lenaphshotheychem, Take heed TO YOUR SOULS, literally; but נפש nephesh and [A] nefsh, both in Hebrew and Arabic, signify the whole self, as well as soul and life; both soul and body must be joined in this work, for it is written, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength.

**Verse 12. *Else if ye do-go back*** The soldier who draws back when going to meet the enemy, forfeits his life. These were the Lord’s soldiers, and if they drew back they drew back unto perdition, their lives being forfeited by their infidelity.

**Verse 13. *They shall be snares*** לפח lephach, a net or gin, set by the artful fowler to catch heedless birds.

**And traps** מוקש mokesh, any snare, toil, or trap, placed on the ground to catch the unwary traveler or wild beast by the foot.

***Scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes*** Nothing can be conceived more vexatious and distressing than a continual goad in the side, or thorn in the eye. They will drive you into obedience to their false gods, and put out the eyes of your understandings by their idolatries. And God will preserve them merely to distress and punish you.

**Verse 14. *The way of all the earth*** I am about to die; I am going into the grave.

***Not one thing hath failed, etc.*** God had so remarkably and literally fulfilled his promises, that not one of his enemies could state that even the smallest of them had not had its most literal accomplishment: this all Israel could testify.

**Verse 15. *So shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things*** His faithfulness in fulfilling his promises is a proof that he will as faithfully accomplish his threatenings, for the veracity of God is equally pledged for both.

**Verse 16. *Ye shall perish quickly from off the good land*** The following note from Mr. John Trapp is very judicious: “This judgment Joshua inculcates Joshua 23:13, 15, and here, because he knew it would be a very grievous thing to them to forego so goodly a land, so lately gotten, and so short a while enjoyed. In the beginning of a speech **τα ηθη**, the milder affections, suit best; but towards the end **τα παθη**, passionate and piercing passages; according to the orator. This rule Joshua observes, being Exodus utroque Caesar; no less an orator than a warrior.” In all this exhortation we see how closely Joshua copies the example of his great master Moses. See Leviticus 26:7, 8, 14, etc.; Deuteronomy 28:7; 32:30. He was tenderly concerned for the welfare of the people, and with a deeply affected heart he spoke to their hearts. No people ever were more fairly and fully warned, and no people profited less by it. The threatenings pronounced here were accomplished in the Babylonish captivity, but more fully in their general dispersion since the crucifixion of our Lord. And should not every Christian fear when he reads, If God spared not the natural branches, take heed that he spare not thee? Surely a worldly, carnal, and godless Christian has no more reason to expect indulgence from the justice of God than a profligate Jew. We have a goodly land, but the justice of God can decree a captivity from it, or a state of bondage in it. The privileges that are abused are thereby forfeited. And this is as applicable to the individual as to the whole system.

## CHAPTER 24

*Joshua gathers all the tribes together at Shechem, 1; and gives them a history of God's gracious dealings with Abraham, 2, 3; Isaac, Jacob, and Esau, 4; Moses and Aaron, and their fathers in Egypt, 5, 6. His judgments on the Egyptians, 7. On the Amorites, 8. Their deliverance from Balak and Balaam, 9, 10. Their conquests in the promised land, and their establishment in the possession of it, 11-13. Exhorts them to abolish idolatry, and informs them of his and his family's resolution to serve Jehovah, 14, 15. The people solemnly promise to serve the Lord alone, and mention his merciful dealings towards them, 16-18. Joshua shows them the holiness of God, and the danger of apostasy, 19, 20. The people again promise obedience, 21. Joshua calls them to witness against themselves, that they had promised to worship God alone, and exhorts them to put away the strange gods, 22, 23. They promise obedience, 24. Joshua makes a covenant with the people, writes it in a book, sets up a stone as a memorial of it, and dismisses the people, 25-28. Joshua's death, 29, and burial, 30. The people continue faithful during that generation, 31. They bury the bones of Joseph in Shechem, 32. Eleazar the high priest dies also, 33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 24

**Verse 1. Joshua gathered all the tribes** This must have been a different assembly from that mentioned in the preceding chapter, though probably held not long after the former.

**To Shechem** As it is immediately added that they presented themselves before God, this must mean the tabernacle; but at this time the tabernacle was not at Shechem but at Shiloh. The Septuagint appear to have been struck with this difficulty, and therefore read  $\sigma\eta\lambda\omega$ . Shiloh, both here and in Joshua 24:25, though the Aldine and Complutensian editions have  $\sigma\upsilon\zeta\epsilon\mu$ , Shechem, in both places. Many suppose that this is the original reading, and that Shechem has crept into the text instead of Shiloh. Perhaps there is more of imaginary than real difficulty in the text. As Joshua was

now old and incapable of travelling, he certainly had a right to assemble the representatives of the tribes wherever he found most convenient, and to bring the ark of the covenant to the place of assembling: and this was probably done on this occasion. Shechem is a place famous in the patriarchal history. Here Abraham settled on his first coming into the land of Canaan, Genesis 12:6, 7; and here the patriarchs were buried, Acts 7:16. And as Shechem lay between Ebal and Gerizim, where Joshua had before made a covenant with the people, Joshua 8:30, etc., the very circumstance of the place would be undoubtedly friendly to the solemnity of the present occasion. Shuckford supposes that the covenant was made at Shechem, and that the people went to Shiloh to confirm it before the Lord. Mr. Mede thinks the Ephraimites had a *proseucha*, or temporary oratory or house of prayer, at Shechem, whither the people resorted for Divine worship when they could not get to the tabernacle; and that this is what is called before the Lord; but this conjecture seems not at all likely, God having forbidden this kind of worship.

**Verse 2. *On the other side of the flood*** The river Euphrates.

***They served other gods.*** Probably Abraham as well as Terah his father was an idolater, till he received the call of God to leave that land. See on Genesis 11:31; 12:1. And for the rest of the history referred to here, see the notes on the parallel passages in the margin.

**Verse 9. *Then Balak-arose and warred against Israel*** This circumstance is not related in Numbers 22:1-41, nor does it appear in that history that the Moabites attacked the Israelites; and probably the warring here mentioned means no more than his attempts to destroy them by the curses of Balaam, and the wiles of the Midianitish women.

**Verse 11. *The men of Jericho fought against you*** See the notes on Joshua 3:1-16 and Joshua 6:1, etc. The people of Jericho are said to have fought against the Israelites, because they opposed them by shutting their gates, etc., though they did not attempt to meet them in the field.

**Verse 12. *I sent the hornet before you*** See the note on Exodus 23:28.

**Verse 14. *Fear the Lord*** Reverence him as the sole object of your religious worship.

**Serve him** Perform his will by obeying his commands.

**In sincerity** Having your whole heart engaged in his worship.

**And in truth** According to the directions he has given you in his infallible word.

**Put away the gods, etc.** From this exhortation of Joshua we learn of what sort the gods were, to the worship of whom these Israelites were still attached. 1. Those which their fathers worshipped on the other side of the flood: i.e., the gods of the CHALDEANS, fire, light, the sun. 2. Those of the EGYPTIANS, Apis, Anubis, the ape, serpents, vegetables, etc. 3. Those of the CANAANITES, MOABITES, etc., Baal-peor or Priapus, Astarte or Venus, etc., etc. All these he refers to in this and the following verse. See at the conclusion of Joshua 24:33. How astonishing is this, that, after all God had done for them, and all the miracles they had seen, there should still be found among them both idols and idolaters! That it was so we have the fullest evidence, both here and in Joshua 24:23; Amos 5:26; and in Acts 7:41. But what excuse can be made for such stupid, not to say brutish, blindness? Probably they thought they could the better represent the Divine nature by using symbols and images, and perhaps they professed to worship God through the medium of these. At least this is what has been alleged in behalf of a gross class of Christians who are notorious for image worship. But on such conduct God will never look with any allowance, where he has given his word and testimony.

**Verse 15. Choose you this day whom ye will serve** Joshua well knew that all service that was not free and voluntary could be only deceit and hypocrisy, and that God loveth a cheerful giver. He therefore calls upon the people to make their choice, for God himself would not force them—they must serve him with all their heart if they served him at all. As for himself and family, he shows them that their choice was already fixed, for they had taken JEHOVAH for their portion.

**Verse 16. God forbid that we should forsake the Lord** That they were now sincere cannot be reasonably doubted, for they served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and the elders that outlived him, Joshua 24:31; but afterwards they turned aside, and did serve other gods. “It is ordinary,” says Mr. Trapp, “for the many-headed multitude to turn with the

stream-to be of the same religion with their superiors: thus at Rome, in DIOCLETIAN'S time, they were pagans; in CONSTANTINE'S Christians; in CONSTANTIUS'S, Arians; in JULIAN'S apostates, and in JOVINIAN'S, Christians again! And all this within less than the age of a man. It is, therefore, a good thing that the heart be established with grace."

**Verse 19. *Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is a holy God*** If we are to take this literally, we cannot blame the Israelites for their defection from the worship of the true God; for if it was impossible for them to serve God, they could not but come short of his kingdom: but surely this was not the case. Instead of **לֹא תִשְׁבְּעוּ** lo thuchelu, ye CANNOT serve, etc., some eminent critics read **לֹא תִכְלֹוּ** lo thechallu, ye shall not CEASE to serve, etc. This is a very ingenious emendation, but there is not one MS. in all the collections of Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi to support it. However, it appears very possible that the first **ו** vau in **תִּשְׁבְּעוּ** did not make a part of the word originally. If the common reading be preferred, the meaning of the place must be, "Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is holy and jealous, unless ye put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the flood. For he is a jealous God, and will not give to nor divide his glory with any other. He is a holy God, and will not have his people defiled with the impure worship of the Gentiles."

**Verse 21. *And the people said-Nay; but we will serve, etc.*** So they understood the words of Joshua to imply no moral impossibility on their side: and had they earnestly sought the gracious assistance of God, they would have continued steady in his covenant.

**Verse 22. *Ye are witnesses against yourselves*** Ye have been sufficiently apprised of the difficulties in your way-of GOD'S holiness-your own weakness and inconstancy-the need you have of Divine help, and the awful consequences of apostasy; and now ye deliberately make your choice. Remember then, that ye are witnesses against yourselves, and your own conscience will be witness, judge, and executioner; or, as one terms it, index, judex, vindex.

**Verse 23. *Now therefore put away*** As you have promised to reform, begin instantly the work of reformation. A man's promise to serve God soon loses its moral hold of his conscience if he do not instantaneously

begin to put it in practice. The grace that enables him to promise is that by the strength of which he is to begin the performance.

**Verse 25. *Joshua made a covenant*** Literally, Joshua cut the covenant, alluding to the sacrifice offered on the occasion.

***And set then a statute and an ordinance*** He made a solemn and public act of the whole, which was signed and witnessed by himself and the people, in the presence of Jehovah; and having done so, he wrote the words of the covenant in the book of the law of God, probably in some part of the skin constituting the great roll, on which the laws of God were written, and of which there were some blank columns to spare. Having done this, he took a great stone and set it up under an oak—that this might be **עֵד** ed or witness that, at such a time and place, this covenant was made, the terms of which might be found written in the book of the law, which was laid up beside the ark. See Deuteronomy 31:26.

**Verse 27. *This stone-hath heard all the words*** That is, the stone itself, from its permanency, shall be in all succeeding ages as competent and as substantial a witness as one who had been present at the transaction, and heard all the words which on both sides were spoken on the occasion.

**Verse 28. *So Joshua*** After this verse the Septuagint insert Joshua 24:31.

**Verse 29. *Joshua the son of Nun-died*** This event probably took place shortly after this public assembly; for he was old and stricken in years when he held the assembly mentioned Joshua 23:2; and as his work was now all done, and his soul ripened for a state of blessedness, God took him to himself, being one hundred and ten years of age; exactly the same age as that of the patriarch Joseph. See Genesis 50:26.

**Verse 30. *And they buried him-in Timnath-serah*** This was his own inheritance, as we have seen Joshua 19:50. The Septuagint add here, “And they put with him there, in the tomb in which they buried him, the knives of stone with which he circumcised the children of Israel in Gilgal, according as the Lord commanded when he brought them out of Egypt; and there they are till this day.” St. Augustine quotes the same passage in his thirtieth question on the book of Joshua, which, in all probability, he took from some copy of the Septuagint. It is very strange that there is no account of any public mourning for the death of this eminent general;



probably, as he was buried in his own inheritance, he had forbidden all funeral pomp, and it is likely was privately interred.

**Verse 31. *And Israel served the Lord, etc.*** Though there was private idolatry among them, for they had strange gods, yet there was no public idolatry all the days of Joshua and of the elders that overlived Joshua; most of whom must have been advanced in years at the death of this great man. Hence Calmet supposes that the whole of this time might amount to about fifteen years. It has already been noted that this verse is placed by the Septuagint after Joshua 24:28.

**Verse 32. *And the bones of Joseph*** See the note on Genesis 50:25, and on Exodus 13:19. This burying of the bones of Joseph probably took place when the conquest of the land was completed, and each tribe had received its inheritance; for it is not likely that this was deferred till after the death of Joshua.

**Verse 33. *And Eleazar-died*** Probably about the same time as Joshua, or soon after; though some think he outlived him six years. Thus, nearly all the persons who had witnessed the miracles of God in the wilderness were gathered to their fathers; and their descendants left in possession of the great inheritance, with the Law of God in their hands, and the bright example of their illustrious ancestors before their eyes. It must be added that they possessed every advantage necessary to make them a great, a wise, and a holy people. How they used, or rather how they abused, these advantages, their subsequent history, given in the sacred books, amply testifies.

***A hill that pertained to Phinehas his son*** This grant was probably made to Phinehas as a token of the respect of the whole nation, for his zeal, courage, and usefulness: for the priests had properly no inheritance. At the end of this verse the Septuagint add: — “In that day the children of Israel, taking up the ark of the covenant of God, carried it about with them, and Phinehas succeeded to the high priest’s office in the place of his father until his death; and he was buried in Gabaath, which belonged to himself. “Then the children of Israel went every man to his own place, and to his own city. “And the children of Israel worshipped Astarte and Ashtaroth, and the gods of the surrounding nations, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of Eglon king of Moab, and he tyrannized over them for eighteen

years.” THE last six verses in this chapter were, doubtless, not written by Joshua; for no man can give an account of his own death and burial. Eleazar, Phinehas, or Samuel, might have added them, to bring down the narration so as to connect it with their own times; and thus preserve the thread of the history unbroken. This is a common case; many men write histories of their own lives, which, in the last circumstances, are finished by others, and who has ever thought of impeaching the authenticity of the preceding part, because the subsequent was the work of a different hand? Hirtius’s supplement has never invalidated the authenticity of the Commentaries of Caesar, nor the work of Quintus Smyrnaeus, that of the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer; nor the 13th book of AENEID, by Mapheus Viggius, the authenticity of the preceding twelve, as the genuine work of Virgil. We should be thankful that an adequate and faithful hand has supplied those circumstances which the original author could not write, and without which the work would have been incomplete. Mr. Saurin has an excellent dissertation on this grand federal act formed by Joshua and the people of Israel on this very solemn occasion, of the substance of which the reader will not be displeased to find the following very short outline, which may be easily filled up by any whose business it is to instruct the public; for such a circumstance may with great propriety be brought before a Christian congregation at any time: — “SEVEN things are to be considered in this renewal of the covenant.

I. The dignity of the mediator.

II. The freedom of those who contracted.

III. The necessity of the choice.

IV. The extent of the conditions.

V. The peril of the engagement.

VI. The solemnity of the acceptance.

VII. The nearness of the consequence. “I. The dignity of the mediator. — Take a view of his names, Hosea and Jehoshua. God will save: he will save. The first is like a promise; the second, the fulfillment of that promise. God will save some time or other:-this is the very person by whom he will accomplish his promise. Take a view of Joshua’s life: his

faith, courage, constancy, heroism, and success. A remarkable type of Christ. See Hebrews 4:8. “II. The freedom of those who contracted. — Take away the gods which your fathers served beyond the flood; and in Egypt, etc., Joshua 24:14, etc. Joshua exhibits to the Israelites all the religions which were then known: 1. That of the Chaldeans, which consisted in the adoration of fire. 2. That of the Egyptians, which consisted in the worship of the ox Apis, cats, dogs, and serpents; which had been preceded by the worship even of vegetables, such as the onion, etc. 3. That of the people of Canaan, the principal objects of which were Astarte, (Venus), and Baal Peor, (Priapus.) Make remarks on the liberty of choice which every man has, and which God, in matters of religion, applies to, and calls into action. “III. The necessity of the choice. — To be without religion, is to be without happiness here, and without any title to the kingdom of God. To have a false religion, is the broad road to perdition; and to have the true religion, and live agreeably to it, is the high road to heaven. Life is precarious-death is at the door-the Judge calls-much is to be done, and perhaps little time to do it in! Eternity depends on the present moment. Choose-choose speedily-determinately, etc. “IV. The extent of the conditions. — Fear the Lord, and serve him in truth and righteousness. Fear the Lord. Consider his being, his power, holiness, justice, etc. This is the gate to religion. Religion itself consists of two parts. I. TRUTH. 1. In opposition to the detestable idolatry of the forementioned nations. 2. In reference to that revelation which God gave of himself. 3. In reference to that solid peace and comfort which false religions may promise, but cannot give; and which the true religion communicates to all who properly embrace it. II. UPRIGHTNESS or integrity, in opposition to those abominable vices by which themselves and the neighboring nations had been defiled. 1. The major part of men have one religion for youth, another for old age. But he who serves God in integrity, serves him with all his heart in every part of life. 2. Most men have a religion of times, places, and circumstances. This is a defective religion. Integrity takes in every time, every place, and every circumstance; God’s law being ever kept before the eyes, and his love in the heart, dictating purity and perfection to every thought, word, and work. 3. Many content themselves with abstaining from vice, and think themselves sure of the kingdom of God because they do not sin as others. But he who serves God in integrity, not only abstains from the act and the appearance of evil,

but steadily performs every moral good. 4. Many think that if they practice some kind of virtues, to which they feel less of a natural repugnance, they bid fair for the kingdom; but this is opposite to uprightness. The religion of God equally forbids every species of vice, and recommends every kind of virtue. “V. The peril of the engagement. — This covenant had in it the nature of an oath; for so much the phrase before the Lord implies: therefore those who entered into this covenant bound themselves by oath unto the Lord, to be steady and faithful in it. But it may be asked, ‘As human nature is very corrupt, and exceedingly fickle, is there not the greatest danger of breaking such a covenant; and is it not better not to make it, than to run the risk of breaking it, and exposing one’s self to superadded punishment on that account?’ Answer: He who makes such a covenant in God’s strength, will have that strength to enable him to prove faithful to it. Besides, if the soul do not feel itself under the most solemn obligation to live to God, it will live to the world and the flesh. Nor is such a covenant as this more solemn and strict than that which we have often made; first in our baptism, and often afterwards in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, etc. Joshua allows there is a great danger in making this covenant. Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy, strong, and jealous God, etc. But this only supposes that nothing could be done right but by his Spirit, and in his strength. The energy of the Holy Spirit is equal to every requisition of God’s holy law, as far as it regards the moral conduct of a believer in Christ. “VI. The solemnity of the acceptance. — Notwithstanding Joshua faithfully laid down the dreadful evils which those might expect who should abandon the Lord; yet they entered solemnly into the covenant. God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, but we will serve the Lord. They seemed to think that not to covenant in this case was to reject. “VII. The nearness of the consequence. — There were false gods among them, and these must be immediately put away. As ye have taken the Lord for your God, then put away the strange gods which are among you, Joshua 24:23. The moment the covenant is made, that same moment the conditions of it come into force. He who makes this covenant with God should immediately break off from every evil design, companion, word, and work. Finally, Joshua erected two monuments of this solemn transaction: 1. He caused the word to be written in the book of the law, Joshua 24:26. 2. He erected a stone under an oak, Joshua 24:27; that these two things might be witnesses against them if they broke the

covenant which they then made, etc.” There is the same indispensable necessity for every one who professes Christianity, to enter into a covenant with God through Christ. He who is not determined to be on God’s side, will be found on the side of the world, the devil, and the flesh. And he who does not turn from all his iniquities, cannot make such a covenant. And he who does not make it now, may probably never have another opportunity. Reader, death is at the door, and eternity is at hand. These are truths which are everywhere proclaimed-everywhere professedly believed-everywhere acknowledged to be important and perhaps nowhere laid to heart as they should be. And yet all grant that they are born to die! ON the character and conduct of Joshua, much has already been said in the notes; and particularly in the preface to this book. A few particulars may be added. It does not appear that Joshua was ever married, or that he had any children. That he was high in the estimation of God, we learn from his being chosen to succeed Moses in the government of the people. He was the person alone, of all the host of Israel, who was deemed every way qualified to go out before the congregation, and go in: to lead them out, and bring them in; and be the shepherd of the people, because the Spirit of God was in him. See Numbers 27:17, etc. He is called the servant of God, as was Moses; and was, of all men of that generation, next in eminence to that great legislator. Like his great master, he neither provided for himself nor his relatives; though he had it constantly in his power so to do. He was the head and leader of the people; the chief and foremost in all fatigues and dangers; without whose piety, prudence, wisdom, and military skill, the whole tribes of Israel, humanly speaking, must have been ruined. And yet this conqueror of the nations did not reserve to him self a goodly inheritance, a noble city, nor any part of the spoils of those he had vanquished. His countrymen, it is true, gave him an inheritance among them, Joshua 19:50. This, we might suppose, was in consideration of his eminent services, and this, we might naturally expect, was the best inheritance in the land! No! they gave him Timnath-serah, in the barren mountains of Ephraim, and even this he asked Joshua 19:50. But was not this the best city in the land? No-it was even NO city; evidently no more than the ruins of one that had stood in that place; and hence it is said, he builded the city and dwelt therein-he, with some persons of his own tribe, revived the stones out of the rubbish, and made it habitable. Joshua believed there was a God; he loved him, acted under his

influence, and endeavored to the utmost of his power to promote the glory of his Maker, and the welfare of man: and he expected his recompense in another world. Like HIM of whom he was an illustrious type, he led a painful and laborious life, devoting himself entirely to the service of God and the public good. How unlike was Joshua to those men who, for certain services, get elevated to the highest honors: but, not content with the recompense thus awarded them by their country, use their new influence for the farther aggrandizement of themselves and dependents, at the expense, and often to the ruin of their country! Joshua retires only from labor when there is no more work to be done, and no more dangers to be encountered. He was the first in the field, and the last out of it; and never attempted to take rest till all the tribes of Israel had got their possessions, and were settled in their inheritances! Of him it might be truly said as of Caesar, he continued to work, nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum: for “he considered nothing done, while any thing remained undone.” Behold this man retiring from office and from life without any kind of emolument! the greatest man of all the tribes of Israel; the most patriotic, and the most serviceable; and yet the worst provided for! Statesmen! naval and military commanders! look Joshua in the face; read his history; and learn from IT what true PATRIOTISM means. That man alone who truly fears and loves God, credits his revelation, and is made a partaker of his Spirit, is capable of performing disinterested services to his country and to mankind!

### MASORETIC NOTES ON JOSHUA

The number of verses in the Book of Joshua is 656, (should be 658, see on Joshua 21:36, etc.,) of which the symbol is found in the word וְהָרָה vetharon, (and shall sing,) Isaiah 35:6. Its middle verse is the Joshua 13:26. Its Masoretic sections are 14; the symbol of which is found in the word יָד yad, (the hand), Ezekiel 37:1. See the note at the end of Genesis, and the Haphtaras at the end of the Pentateuch.

# PREFACE TO THE BOOK

OF

## JUDGES

THE persons called Judges, שופטים Shophetim, from שפט, shaphat, to judge, discern regulate, and direct, were the heads or chiefs of the Israelites who governed the Hebrew republic from the days of Moses and Joshua till the time of Saul. The word judge is not to be taken here in its usual signification, i.e., one who determines controversies, and denounces the judgment of the law in criminal cases, but one who directs and rules a state or nation with sovereign power, administers justice, makes peace or war, and leads the armies of the people over whom he presides. Officers, with the same power, and nearly with the same name, were established by the Tyrians in new Tyre, after the destruction of old Tyre, and the termination of its regal state. The Carthaginian Suffetes appear to have been the same as the Hebrew Shophetim; as were also the Archons among the Athenians, and the Dictators among the ancient Romans. But they were neither hereditary governors, nor were they chosen by the people: they were properly vicegerents or lieutenants of the Supreme God; and were always, among the Israelites, chosen by Him in a supernatural way. They had no power to make or change the laws; they were only to execute them under the direction of the Most High. God, therefore, was king in Israel: the government was a theocracy; and the judges were His deputies. The office, however, was not continual, as there appear intervals in which there was no judge in Israel. And, as they were extraordinary persons, they were only raised up on extraordinary occasions to be instruments in the hands of God of delivering their nation from the oppression and tyranny of the neighboring powers. They had neither pomp nor state; nor, probably, any kind of emoluments. The chronology of the Book of Judges is extremely embarrassed and difficult; and there is no agreement among learned men

concerning it. When the deliverances, and consequent periods of rest, so



separate accounts; which is very unlikely. Others ascribe it to Phinehas, to Samuel, to Hezekiah, and some to Ezra. But it is evident that it was the work of an individual, and of a person who lived posterior to the time of the judges, (see Judges 2:10, etc.) and most probably of Samuel. The duration of the government of the Israelites by judges, from the death of Joshua to the commencement of the reign of Saul, was about three hundred and thirty-nine years. But as this book does not include the government of Eli, nor that of Samuel, but ends with the death of Samson, which occurred in A.M. 2887; consequently, it includes only three hundred and seventeen years; but the manner in which these are reckoned is very different, as we have seen above; and as will be more particularly evident in the following tables by Archbishop Usher and Sir John Marsham.

**CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THIS BOOK, ACCORDING TO ARCHBISHOP  
USHER.**

**A.M. 2570** Death of Joshua, aged one hundred and ten years.

**A.M. 2585** After his death, and that of the elders who succeeded him, the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord; to this period are to be referred the idolatry of Micah, the conquest of Laish, and the idolatry of a part of the tribe of Dan, which are mentioned Judges 17, and 21.

The story of the Levite and his concubine, and the war which succeeded it, Judges 19, 20, 21. This includes a period of about twenty-two years, viz., fifteen for the time of the elders who survived Joshua, and seven years of anarchy and rest, after which the Israelites fell under the domination of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia.

**A.M. 2591** The first servitude under Chushan, which tasted eight years, began in 2591, and ended in 2599. Othniel delivered Israel the fortieth year after the rest procured by Joshua.

**A.M. 2662** The land enjoys rest about sixty-two years.

**A.M. 2662** Second servitude, under Eglon, king of Moab, which lasted eighteen years.

**A.M. 2679** Ehud delivers Israel.

After him appears Shamgar, and the land enjoys rest to the eightieth year from the termination of the first deliverance procured by Othniel, Judges 3:15-30.

**A.M. 2699** The third servitude, under the Canaanites, which lasted twenty years, Judges 4:1-3.

**A.M. 2719** Deborah and Barak deliver Israel.

From the deliverance procured by Ehud, to the end of the government of Deborah and Barak, was forty years.

**A.M. 2737** About this time the Assyrian empire was founded by Ninus, son of Belus. The Assyrians had previously to this reigned five hundred and twenty years over a part of Asia; but Ninus, forming a league with Arius, king of the Arabs, conquered the whole of Asia, and governed it for seventeen years. He reigned in all fifty-two years.

**A.M. 2752** The fourth servitude, under the Midianites, which lasted seven years; Judges 6:1.

**A.M. 2759** Gideon delivers Israel.

**A.M. 2768** From the rest procured by Deborah and Barak to the deliverance by Gideon are forty years, Judges 6:1-8:35. After the death of Gideon the people fall into idolatry. Abimelech, natural son of Gideon, kills seventy of his brethren, Judges 9:5.

**A.M. 2769** Abimelech is proclaimed king of the Shechemites.

**A.M. 2771** He reigns three years, and was killed at the siege of Thebes.

**A.M. 2772** Tola governs after Abimelech, twenty-three years.

**A.M. 2781** The commencement of the kingdom of the Lydians under Argon, who reigned in Sardis. This empire continued five hundred and five years; Herodot. lib. i. cap. 7.

**A.M. 2789** Semiramis marries Ninus, and reigns forty-two years over almost the whole of Asia. Jair succeeds Tola, and governs twenty-two years.

**A.M. 2795** The fifth servitude under the Philistines, which lasted eighteen years.

**A.M. 2799** God delivers the Israelites who dwelt beyond Jordan, from the Ammonites, etc., Judges 10:18.

**A.M. 2816** Death of Jair, Judges 10:5.

**A.M. 2817** Jephthah is chosen judge, and defeats the Ammonites.

Forty-two thousand Ephraimites slain at the passage of Jordan. Jephthah governs six years, Judges 11:1-12:7.

Troy is taken by the Greeks after a siege of ten years.

**A.M. 2820** Death of Jephthah. Ibzan governs seven years.

**A.M. 2823** Elon succeeds him, and governs ten years.

**A.M. 2830** Semiramis dies, aged sixty-two years, having reigned forty-two years; she is succeeded by Ninyas.

**A.M. 2840** Abdon judges Israel eight years, beginning from.

**A.M. 2848** Eli judges Israel, after the death of Abdon, forty years.

The sixth servitude, under the Philistines, which lasted forty years, Judges 13:1. It began seven years after the commencement of the government of Eli.

**A.M. 2849** The birth of Samson, Judges 13:24.

**A.M. 2867** Marriage of Samson; he begins to deliver Israel, and continues twenty years.

**A.M. 2868** Samson burns the corn of the Philistines, and kills a thousand of them with the jaw-bone of an ass, Judges 15:3-20.

**A.M. 2887** Samson is betrayed by his wife, delivered into the hands of the Philistines, and has his eyes put out. The same year he pulls down a temple, in the ruins of which himself and multitudes of the Philistines are buried, Judges 16:1-31.

**A.M. 2888** The death of Eli, and the beginning of the government of Samuel, who delivers Israel from the oppression of the Philistines, 1 Samuel 7:14.

This is in substance the chronology of Archbishop Usher on this period, the correctness of which is justly questioned.

**THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES,  
ACCORDING TO THE SCHEME OF SIR JOHN MARSHAM**

Years after the Exodus Joshua governs Israel twenty-five years from the exodus to the sixty-fifth year after that deliverance.

Death of Joshua, aged 110 years.

**YEARS AFTER EXODUS (Y.A.E)**

**Y.A.E. 40** Government of the elders.

**Y.A.E. 65** Anarchy and idolatry, thirty-four years after Joshua.

**Y.A.E. 99** First servitude under Chushan lasts eight years.

Othniel, son-in-law, of Caleb, defeats Chushan.

**Y.A.E. 107** Forty years' rest.

**Y.A.E. 147** Second servitude, under Eglon, who oppressed the Jews beyond Jordan, and a part of the Benjamites, fifteen years.

**Y.A.E. 165** Ehud slays Eglon, and delivers his country.

Peace of fourscore years beyond Jordan; which continues till the invasion of the Midianites.

**Y.A.E. 185** Third servitude under Jabin, who chiefly oppressed the tribes which dwelt in the northern parts of Canaan. This servitude lasted twenty years.

**Y.A.E. 194** Shamgar kills six hundred Philistines, and delivers Israel.

**Y.A.E. 203** Deborah and Barak defeat Sisera; aided by the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali.

**Y.A.E. 243** Rest of forty years, which continues to the two hundred and forty-third year of the exodus. Fourth servitude under the Midianites, which lasts seven years.

**Y.A.E. 253** Gideon delivers Israel, assisted by Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali.

**Y.A.E. 293** Abimelech reigns three years at Shechem.

Tola judges Israel twenty-three years.

Jair judges Israel twenty-two years.

**Y.A.E. 345** Fifth servitude under the Ammonites, beyond Jordan, three hundred years after the Israelites had taken possession of the land. This servitude lasted eighteen years.

**Y.A.E. 363** Jephthah delivers Israel.

**Y.A.E. 383** While the Ammonites oppressed Israel on the other side of Jordan, the Philistines afflicted those on this side of that river. This servitude lasted forty years, during which Samson and Eli were judges; but they did not wholly deliver Israel. They were not delivered till the time of Samuel, three hundred and eighty-three years after the exodus.

During this interval God raised Up Ibzan, who judged Israel seven years; and Elon, who judged ten years; and Abdon, who judged eight years; but neither the year of the commencement of their office, nor of their death, can be exactly ascertained.

**Y.A.E. 403** Saul reigns forty years.

**Y.A.E. 443** David reigns forty years.

**Y.A.E. 476** Solomon begins to reign four hundred and seventy-six years after the exodus;

**Y.A.E. 480** And lays the foundation of the temple in the fourth year of his reign.

These are the schemes of those two great chronologists. as exhibited by Calmet. Dr. Hales, dissatisfied with these schemes, and with all others hitherto published, strikes out a new path: and, following the chronology

of Josephus, with some corrections, makes the whole period, from the time of Joshua and the elders who survived him, to the election of Saul, four hundred and ninety-eight years, which he accounts for thus: — In the general introduction of his Analysis of Scripture Chronology, he endeavors to show that the interval from the exodus to the foundation of Solomon's temple was six hundred and twenty-one years; from which, subtracting one hundred and twenty-three years, (namely, forty years from the exodus to this return, eighty years from the two reigns of Saul and David, and the three first years of Solomon,) the remainder is four hundred and ninety-eight years. "But," says the learned and indefatigable doctor, "although we are indebted to Josephus for this, and for supplying some material chasms in the sacred annals; such as, 1, the administration of Joshua and the elders, twenty-five years; 2, the ensuing anarchy, eighteen years; 3, the administration of Shamgar, one year; and, 4, of Samuel, twelve years; still his detail of the outline there given requires correction. "For, 1. The year ascribed to Shamgar's administration is too short, as is evident from Deborah's account, Judges 5:6; I have therefore included it, with David Ganz, in Ehud's enormous administration of eighty years, and transferred the one year to Joshua's, making that twenty-six years. 2. I have restored Abdon's administration of eight years omitted by Josephus, and deducted it from the eighteen years he assigns to the anarchy, thereby reducing the latter to its correct length of ten years. 3. I have dated the first division of the conquered lands in the sixth year, which Josephus reckoned in the fifth year; because Caleb was forty years old when Moses sent him as one of the spies from Kadesh-barnea, in the second year after the exode; consequently he was thirty-nine years old at the exode; and therefore seventy-nine years old, forty years after, at the arrival in Canaan; but he was eighty-five years old when he claimed and got the hill of Hebron for an inheritance, which therefore must have been six years after the arrival in Canaan. Compare Numbers 10:11; 13:6, with Joshua 14:6-15. 4. Josephus has omitted the date of Samuel's call to be a prophet, 1 Samuel 3:1-19, which St. Paul reckons four hundred and fifty years after the first division of lands, Acts 13:19, 20, and which, therefore, commenced with the ten last years of Eli's administration of forty years. This last most important chronological character from the New Testament verifies the whole of this rectification; while it demonstrates the spuriousness of the period of four hundred and eighty years in the present Masorete text of 1 Kings 6:1, from

the exode to the foundation of Solomon's temple." Following the chronology of Josephus, in preference to the Hebrew text, his table of the Judges is as follows: —

(Yrs. B.C.)

1. Joshua and the elders	26	1608
First division of lands		1602
Second division of lands		1595
Anarchy, or interregnum	10	1582
I. Servitude to the Mesopotamians.	8	1572
2. Othniel	40	1564
II. Servitude to the Moabites	18	1524
3. Ehud and Shamgar	80	1506
III. Servitude to the Canaanites	20	1426
4. Deborah and Barak	40	1406
IV. Servitude to the Midianites	7	1366
5. Gideon	40	1359
6. Abimelech	3	1319
7. Tola	23	1316
8. Jair	22	1293
V. Servitude to the Ammonites.	18	1271
9. Jephthah	6	1253
10. Ibzan	7	1247
11. Elon	10	1247
12. Abdon	8	1230
VI. Servitude to the Philistines	40	1222
13. Samson	20	1202
14. Eli	40	30
15. Samuel called as a prophet.	10	1152
VII. Servitude to the Philistines	20	1142
15. Samuel	12	1122
Saul elected king	498	1110

“The only alteration here made in the present text of Josephus is the insertion of Tola and his administration of twenty-three years (Judges 10:1, 2,) which are inadvertently omitted between Abimelech and Jair, Ant. 5, 7, 15, page 56, but evidently were included in the original scheme of Josephus as being requisite to complete the period of six hundred and twenty-one years. To Abdon no years are assigned by Josephus, Ant. 5, 7, 15, page 215, perhaps designedly, for Clemens Alexandrinus relates that some chronologers collected together the years of Abatthan and Ebron, (Abdon and Elon,) or made them contemporary. But we may easily reconcile Josephus with SCRIPTURE by only deducting eight years from the eighteen years interregnum after Joshua, which will give Abdon his quota of years, and leave that interregnum its juster length of ten years. “It is truly remarkable, and a proof of the great skill and accuracy of Josephus in forming the outline of this period, that he assigns, with St. Paul, a reign of forty years to Saul, Acts 13:21, which is omitted in the OLD TESTAMENT. His outline also corresponds with St. Paul’s period of four hundred and fifty years from the division of the conquered lands of Canaan, until Samuel the prophet.” See Dr. Hale’s Chronology, vol. i., pages 16, 17; vol. ii., page 28, 5-8. Another method of removing these difficulties has been lately attempted in a new edition of the Universal History; but of conjectures there is no end; if the truth be not found in some of the preceding systems, the difficulties, I fear, must remain. I have my doubts whether the author of this book ever designed to produce the subject in a strict chronological series. The book, in several places, appears to have been composed of historical memoranda having very little relation to each other, or among themselves; and particularly what is recorded in the beginning and the end. There is, however, one light in which the whole book may be viewed, which renders it invaluable; it is a most remarkable history of the long-suffering of God towards the Israelites, in which we find the most signal instances of his justice and his mercy alternately displayed; the people sinned, and were punished; they repented, and found mercy. Something of this kind we meet with in every page. And these things are written for our warning. None should presume, for God is JUST; none need despair, for God is MERCIFUL.



# THE BOOK

OF

# JUDGES

- Year before the common year of Christ, 1443.
- Julian Period, 3271.
- Year from the Flood, 904.
- Year before the first Olympiad, 667.
- Creation from Tisri, or September, 2561.

## CHAPTER 1

*After the death of Joshua the Israelites purpose to attack the remaining Canaanites; and the tribe of Judah is directed to go up first, 1, 2. Judah and Simeon unite, attack the Canaanites and Perrizites, kill ten thousand of them, take Adoni-bezek prisoner, cut off his thumbs and great toes, and bring him to Jerusalem, where he dies, 3-7. Jerusalem conquered, 8. A new war with the Canaanites under the direction of Caleb, 9-11. Kirjath-sepher taken by Othniel, on which he receives, as a*

**Verse 1. *Now after***

made a decree that all the inhabitants of the island of AEGINA should have the thumb cut off from the right hand, so that they might ever after be disabled from holding a spear, yet might handle an oar." This is considered by AELIAN an act of great cruelty; and he wishes to MINERVA, the guardian of the city, to JUPITER ELEUTHERIUS, and all the gods of Greece, that the Athenians had never done such things. It was a custom among those Romans who did not like a military life, to cut off their own thumbs, that they might not be capable of serving in the army. Sometimes the parents cut off the thumbs of their children, that they might not be called into the army. According to Suetonius, in Vit. August., c. 24, a Roman knight, who had cut off the thumbs of his two sons to prevent them from being called to a military life was, by the order of Augustus, publicly sold, both he and his property. These are the words of Suetonius: Equitem Romanum, quod duobus filis adolescentibus, causa detractandi sacramenti, pollices amputasset, ipsum bonaque subjecit hastae. Calmet remarks that the Italian language has preserved a term, poltrone, which signifies one whose thumb is cut off, to designate a soldier destitute of courage and valor. We use poltroon to signify a dastardly fellow, without considering the import of the original. There have been found frequent instances of persons maiming themselves, that they might be incapacitated for military duty. I have heard an instance in which a knavish soldier discharged his gun through his hand, that he might be discharged from his regiment. The cutting off of the thumbs was probably designed for a double purpose: 1. To incapacitate them for war; and, 2. To brand them as cowards.

***Gathered their meat under my table*** I think this was a proverbial mode of expression, to signify reduction to the meanest servitude; for it is not at all likely that seventy kings, many of whom must have been contemporaries, were placed under the table of the king of Bezek, and there fed; as in the houses of poor persons the dogs are fed with crumbs and offal, under the table of their owners.

***So God hath requited me.*** The king of Bezek seems to have had the knowledge of the true God, and a proper notion of a Divine providence. He now feels himself reduced to that state to which he had cruelly reduced others. Those acts in him were acts of tyrannous cruelty; the act towards him was an act of retributive justice.

**And there he died.** He continued at Jerusalem in a servile and degraded condition till the day of his death. How long he lived after his disgrace we know not.

**Verse 8. *Had fought against Jerusalem*** We read this verse in a parenthesis, because we suppose that it refers to the taking of this city by Joshua; for as he had conquered its armies and slew its king, Joshua 10:26, it is probable that he took the city: yet we find that the Jebusites still dwelt in it, Joshua 15:63; and that the men of Judah could not drive them out, which probably refers to the strong hold or fortress on Mount Zion, which the Jebusites held till the days of David, who took it, and totally destroyed the Jebusites. See 2 Samuel 5:6-9, and 1 Chronicles 11:4-8. It is possible that the Jebusites who had been discomfited by Joshua, had again become sufficiently strong to possess themselves of Jerusalem; and that they were now defeated, and the city itself set on fire: but that they still were able to keep possession of their strong fort on Mount Zion, which appears to have been the citadel of Jerusalem.

**Verse 9. *The Canaanites, that dwelt to the mountain*** The territories of the tribe of Judah lay in the most southern part of the promised land, which was very mountainous, though towards the west it had many fine plains. In some of these the Canaanites had dwelt; and the expedition marked here was for the purpose of finally expelling them. But probably this is a recapitulation of what is related Joshua 10:36; 11:21; 15:13.

**Verse 12. — 15. *And Caleb, etc.*** See this whole account, which is placed here by way of recapitulation, in Joshua 15:13-19, and the explanatory notes there.

**Verse 13.** See Clarke note on “Judges 1:12”.

**Verse 14.** See Clarke note on “Judges 1:12”.

**Verse 15.** See Clarke note on “Judges 1:12”.

**Verse 16. *The children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law*** For an account of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, see Exodus 18:1-27; Numbers 10:29, etc.

***The city of palm trees*** This seems to have been some place near Jericho, which city is expressly called the city of palm trees, Deuteronomy 34:3;

and though destroyed by Joshua, it might have some suburbs remaining where these harmless people had taken up their residence. The Kenites, the descendants of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, were always attached to the Israelites: they remained with them, says Calmet, during their wanderings in the wilderness, and accompanied them to the promised land. They received there a lot with the tribe of Judah, and remained in the city of palm trees during the life of Joshua; but after his death, not contented with their portion, or molested by the original inhabitants, they united with the tribe of Judah, and went with them to attack Arad. After the conquest of that country, the Kenites established themselves there, and remained in it till the days of Saul, mingled with the Amalekites. When this king received a commandment from God to destroy the Amalekites, he sent a message to the Kenites to depart from among them, as God would not destroy them with the Amalekites. From them came Hemath, who was the father of the house of Rechab, 1 Chronicles 2:55, and the Rechabites, of whom we have a remarkable account Jeremiah 35:1, etc.

**Verse 17. *The city was called Hormah.*** This appears to be the same transaction mentioned Numbers 21:1, etc., where see the notes.

**Verse 18. *Judah took Gaza-and Askelon-and Ekron*** There is a most remarkable variation here in the Septuagint; I shall set down the verse: **και ουκ εκληρονομησεν ιουδας την γαζαν, ουδε τα ορια αυτης ουδε την ασκαλωνα, ουδε τα ορια αυτης και την ακκαρων, ουδε τα ορια αυτης την αζωτον, ουδε τα περισπορια αυτης και ην κυριος μετα ιουδα.** “But Judah DID NOT possess Gaza, NOR the coast thereof; neither Askelon, nor the coasts thereof, neither Ekron, nor the coasts thereof; neither Azotus, nor its adjacent places: and the Lord was with Judah.” This is the reading of the Vatican and other copies of the Septuagint: but the Alexandrian MS., and the text of the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglots, agree more nearly with the Hebrew text. St. Augustine and Procopius read the same as, the Vatican MS.; and Josephus expressly says that the Israelites took only Askelon and Azotus, but did not take Gaza nor Ekron; and the whole history shows that these cities were not in the possession of the Israelites, but of the Philistines; and if the Israelites did take them at this time, as the Hebrew text states, they certainly lost them in a very short time after.

**Verse 19.** *And the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.* Strange! were the iron chariots too strong for Omnipotence? The whole of this verse is improperly rendered. The first clause, The Lord was with Judah should terminate the 18th verse, and this gives the reason for the success of this tribe: The Lord was with Judah, and therefore he slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, etc., etc. Here then is a complete period: the remaining part of the verse either refers to a different time, or to the rebellion of Judah against the Lord, which caused him to withdraw his support. Therefore the Lord was with Judah, and these were the effects of his protection; but afterwards, when the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, etc., God was no longer with them, and their enemies were left to be pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their side, as God himself had said. This is the turn given to the verse by Jonathan ben Uzziel, the Chaldee paraphrast: “And the WORD of Jehovah was in the support of the house of Judah, and they extirpated the inhabitants of the mountains; but afterwards, WHEN THEY SINNED, they were not able to extirpate the inhabitants of the plain country, because they had chariots of iron.” They were now left to their own strength, and their adversaries prevailed against them. From a work called the Dhunoor Veda, it appears that the ancient Hindoos had war chariots similar to those of the Canaanites. They are described as having many wheels, and to have contained a number of rooms. — Ward’s Customs.

**Verse 20.** *They gave Hebron unto Caleb* See this whole transaction explained Joshua 14:12, etc.

**Verse 21.** *The Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin* Jerusalem was situated partly in the tribe of Judah, and partly in the tribe of Benjamin, the northern part belonging to the latter tribe, the southern to the former. The Jebusites had their strongest position in the part that belonged to Benjamin, and from this place they were not wholly expelled till the days of David. See the notes on Judges 1:8. What is said here of Benjamin is said of Judah, Joshua 15:63. There must be an interchange of the names in one or other of these places.

**Unto this day.** As the Jebusites dwelt in Jerusalem till the days of David, by whom they were driven out, and the author of the book of Judges states them to have been in possession of Jerusalem when he wrote; therefore this book was written before the reign of David.

**Verse 22. *The house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel*** That is, the tribe of Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh, who dwelt beyond Jordan. Beth-el was not taken by Joshua, though he took Ai, which was nigh to it. Instead of **בֵּית יוֹסֵף** beith Yoseph, “the house of Joseph,” ten of Dr. Kennicott’s MSS. and six of Deuteronomy Rossi’s have **בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף** beney Yoseph, “the children of Joseph;” and this is the reading of both the Septuagint and Arabic, as well as of two copies in the Hexapla of Origen.

**Verse 23. *Beth-el-the name of the city before was Luz.*** Concerning this city and its names, see the notes on Genesis 28:19.

**Verse 24. *Show us-the entrance into the city*** Taken in whatever light we choose, the conduct of this man was execrable. He was a traitor to his country, and he was accessory to the destruction of the lives and property of his fellow citizens, which he most sinfully betrayed, in order to save his own. According to the rules and laws of war, the children of Judah might avail themselves of such men and their information; but this does not lessen, on the side of this traitor, the turpitude of the action.

**Verse 26. *The land of the Hittites*** Probably some place beyond the land of Canaan, in Arabia, whither this people emigrated when expelled by Joshua. The man himself appears to have been a Hittite, and to perpetuate the name of his city he called the new one which he now founded Luz, this being the ancient name of Beth-el.

**Verse 27. *Beth-shean*** Called by the Septuagint **σκυθωνπολις**, Scythopolis, or the city of the Scythians. On these towns see the notes, Joshua 17:12, 13.

**Verse 29. *Neither did Ephraim*** See the notes on the parallel passages, Joshua 16:5-10.

**Verse 30. *Neither did Zebulun drive out*** See on Joshua 19:10-15.

**Verse 31. *Neither did Asher*** See on *Joshua* 19:24-31. **Accho** Supposed to be the city of Ptolemais, near to Mount Carmel.

**Verse 33. *Neither did Naphtali*** See the notes on *Joshua* 19:32-39.

**Verse 34. *The Amorites forced the children of Dan, etc.*** Just as the ancient Britons were driven into the mountains of Wales by the Romans; and the native Indians driven back into the woods by the British settlers in America.

**Verse 35. *The Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres*** They perhaps agreed to dwell in the mountainous country, being unable to maintain themselves on the plain, and yet were so powerful that the Danites could not totally expel them; they were, however, laid under tribute, and thus the house of Joseph had the sovereignty. The Septuagint have sought out a literal meaning for the names of several of these places, and they render the verse thus: "And the Amorites began to dwell in the mount of Tiles, in which there are bears, and in which there are foxes." Thus they translate Heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim.

**Verse 36. *Akrabbim*** Of scorpions; probably so called from the number of those animals in that place.

***From the rock, and upward.*** The Vulgate understand by סֵלַע sela, a rock, the city Petra, which was the capital of Arabia Petraea. THE whole of this chapter appears to be designed as a sort of supplement to those places in the book of *Joshua* which are referred to in the notes and in the margin; nor is there any thing in it worthy of especial remark. We everywhere see the same fickle character in the Israelites, and the goodness and long-suffering of God towards them. An especial Providence guides their steps, and a fatherly hand chastises them for their transgressions. They are obliged to live in the midst of their enemies, often straitened, but never overcome so as to lose the land which God gave them as their portion. We should learn wisdom from what they have suffered, and confidence in the protection and providence of God from their support, because these things were written for our learning. Few can be persuaded that adversity is a blessing, but without it how little should we learn! He, who in the school of affliction has his mind turned towards God,

*“Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,*



*Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.”*

## CHAPTER 2

*An angel comes to the Israelites at Bochim, and gives them various reproofs, at which they are greatly affected, 1-5. They served the Lord during the days of Joshua, and the elders who succeeded him, 6, 7. Joshua having died, and all that generation, the people revolted from the true God and served idols, 8-13. The Lord, being angry, delivered them into the hands of spoilers, and they were greatly distressed, 14, 15. A general account of the method which God used to reclaim them, by sending them judges whom they frequently disobeyed, 16-19. Therefore God left the various nations of the land to plague and punish them, 20-23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. *An angel of the Lord*** In the preceding chapter we have a summary of several things which took place shortly after the death of Joshua; especially during the time in which the elders lived (that is, the men who were contemporary with Joshua, but survived him,) and while the people continued faithful to the Lord. In this chapter, and some parts of the following, we have an account of the same people abandoned by their God and reduced to the heaviest calamities, because they had broken their covenant with their Maker. This chapter, and the first eight verses of the next, may be considered as an epitome of the whole book, in which we see, on one hand, the crimes of the Israelites; and on the other, the punishments inflicted on them by the Lord; their repentance, and return to their allegiance; and the long-suffering and mercy of God, shown in pardoning their backslidings, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies. The angel of the Lord, mentioned here, is variously interpreted; some think it was Phinehas, the high priest, which is possible; others, that it was a prophet, sent to the place where they were now assembled, with an extraordinary commission from God, to reprove them for their sins, and to show them the reason why God had not rooted out their enemies from the land; this is the opinion of the Chaldee paraphrast, consequently of the ancient Jews; others think that an angel, properly such, is intended; and

several are of opinion that it was the Angel of the Covenant, the Captain of the Lord's host, which had appeared unto Joshua, Judges 5:14, and no less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. I think it more probable that some extraordinary human messenger is meant, as such messengers, and indeed prophets, apostles, etc., are frequently termed angels, that is, messengers of the Lord. The person here mentioned appears to have been a resident at Gilgal, and to have come to Bochim on this express errand.

***I will never break my covenant*** Nor did God ever break it. A covenant is never broken but by him who violates the conditions of it: when any of the contracting parties violates any of the conditions, the covenant is then broken, and by that party alone; and the conditions on the other side are null and void.

**Verse 3. *I will not drive them out from before you*** Their transgressions, and breach of the covenant, were the reasons why they were not put in entire possession of the promised land. See note at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 5. *They called the name of that place Bochim*** The word בְּכִים bochim signifies weepings or lamentations; and is translated by the Septuagint κλαυθυων or κλαυθυωνες, bewailings; and it is supposed that the place derived its name from these lamentations of the people. Some think the place itself, where the people were now assembled, was Shiloh, now named Bochim because of the above circumstance. It should be observed, that the angel speaks here in the person of God, by whom he was sent; as the prophets frequently do.

**Verse 6. *When Joshua had let the people go*** The author of this book is giving here a history of the people, from the division of the land by Joshua to the time in which the angel speaks. Joshua divided the land to them by lot; recommended obedience to God, which they solemnly promised: and they continued faithful during his life, and during the lives of those who had been his contemporaries, but who had survived him. When all that generation who had seen the wondrous works of God in their behalf had died, then the succeeding generation, who knew not the Lord-who had not seen his wondrous works-forsook his worship, and worshipped Baalim and Ashtaroth, the gods of the nations among whom they lived, and thus the Lord was provoked to anger; and this was the reason why they were

delivered into the hands of their enemies. This is the sum of their history to the time in which the angel delivers his message.

**Verse 8. *Joshua-died*** See the notes on Joshua 24:29, 30.

**Verse 11. *Served Baalim*** The word **בעלים** baalim signifies lords. Their false gods they considered supernatural rulers or governors, each having his peculiar district and office; but when they wished to express a particular **בעל** baal, they generally added some particular epithet, as Baal-zephon, Baal-peor, Baal-zehub, Baal-shamayim, etc., as Calmet has well observed. The two former were adored by the Moabites; Baal-zebub by the Ekronites. Baal-berith was honored at Shechem; and Baal-shamayim, the lord or ruler of the heavens, was adored among the Phoenicians, Syrians, Chaldeans, etc. And whenever the word baal is used without an epithet, this is the god that is intended; and probably, among all these people, it meant the sun.

**Verse 12. *Which brought them out of the land of Egypt*** This was one of the highest aggravations of their offense; they forsook the God who brought them out of Egypt; a place in which they endured the most grievous oppression and were subjected to the most degrading servitude, from which they never could have rescued themselves; and they were delivered by such a signal display of the power, justice, and mercy of God, as should never have been forgotten, because the most stupendous that had ever been exhibited. They forsook HIM, and served idols as destitute of real being as of influence and power.

**Verse 13. *Served Baal and Ashtaroth.*** In a general way, probably, Baal and Ashtaroth mean the sun and moon; but in many cases Ashtaroth seems to have been the same among the Canaanites as Venus was among the Greeks and Romans, and to have been worshipped with the same obscene rites.

**Verse 14. *The hands of spoilers*** Probably marauding parties of the Canaanites, making frequent incursions in their lands, carrying away cattle, spoiling their crops, etc.

**Verse 15. *The hand of the Lord was against them*** The power which before protected them when obedient, was now turned against them

because of their disobedience. They not only had not God with them, but they had God against them.

**Verse 16. *The Lord raised up judges*** That is, leaders, generals, and governors, raised up by an especial appointment of the Lord, to deliver them from, and avenge them on, their adversaries. See the preface.

**Verse 17. *Went a whoring after other gods*** Idolatry, or the worship of strange gods, is frequently termed adultery, fornication, and whoredom, in the sacred writings. As many of their idolatrous practices were accompanied with impure rites, the term was not only metaphorically but literally proper.

**Verse 18. *The Lord was with the judge*** God himself was king, and the judge was his representative.

***It repented the Lord*** He changed his purpose towards them: he purposed to destroy them because of their sin; they repented and turned to him, and he changed this purpose. The purpose was to destroy them if they did not repent; when they did repent, his not destroying them was quite consistent with his purpose.

**Verse 19. *When the judge was dead*** It appears that in general the office of the judge was for life.

***Their stubborn way.*** Their hard or difficult way. Most sinners go through great tribulation, in order to get to eternal perdition; they would have had less pain in their way to heaven.

**Verse 20. *The anger of the Lord was hot*** They were as fuel by their transgressions; and the displeasure of the Lord was as a fire about to kindle and consume that fuel.

**Verse 21. *I will not henceforth drive out*** As a people, they never had personal courage, discipline, or hardihood, sufficient to stand before their enemies: the advantages they gained were by the peculiar interference of God. This they had while obedient; when they ceased to obey, his strong arm was no longer stretched out in their behalf; therefore their enemies continued to possess the land which God purposed to give them as their inheritance for ever.

**Verse 22. *That through them I may prove Israel*** There appeared to be no other way to induce this people to acknowledge the true God, but by permitting them to fall into straits from which they could not be delivered but by his especial providence. These words are spoken after the manner of men; and the metaphor is taken from the case of a master or father, who distrusts the fidelity or obedience of his servant or son, and places him in such circumstances that, by his good or evil conduct, he may justify his suspicions, or give him proofs of his fidelity.

**Verse 23. *Without driving them out hastily*** Had God expelled all the ancient inhabitants at once, we plainly see, from the subsequent conduct of the people, that they would soon have abandoned his worship, and in their prosperity forgotten their deliverer. He drove out at first as many as were necessary in order to afford the people, as they were then, a sufficiency of room to settle in; as the tribes increased in population, they were to extend themselves to the uttermost of their assigned borders, and expel all the remaining inhabitants. On these accounts God did not expel the aboriginal inhabitants hastily or at once; and thus gave the Israelites time to increase; and by continuing the ancient inhabitants, prevented the land from running into waste, and the wild beasts from multiplying; both of which must have infallibly taken place had God driven out all the old inhabitants at once, before the Israelites were sufficiently numerous to occupy the whole of the land. THESE observations are important, as they contain the reason why God did not expel the Canaanites. God gave the Israelites a grant of the whole land, and promised to drive out their enemies from before them if they continued faithful. While they continued faithful, God did continue to fulfill his promise; their borders were enlarged, and their enemies fled before them. When they rebelled against the Lord, he abandoned them, and their enemies prevailed against them. Of this, their frequent lapses and miscarriages, with God's repeated interpositions in their behalf, are ample evidence. One or two solitary instances might not be considered as sufficient proof; but by these numerous instances the fact is established. Each rebellion against God produced a consequent disaster in their affairs; each true humiliation was invariably followed by an especial Divine interposition in their behalf. These afforded continual proof of God's being, providence, and grace. The whole economy is wondrous; and its effects, impressive and convincing. The people were not hastily put in

possession of the promised land, because of their infidelity. Can the infidels controvert this statement? If not then their argument against Divine revelation, from “the failure of positive promises and oaths,” falls to the ground. They have not only in this, but in all other respects, lost all their props.

*“Helpless and prostrate all their system lies  
Cursing its fate, and, as it curses, dies.”*

## CHAPTER 3

*An account of the nations that we left to prove Israel, 1-4. How the people provoked the Lord, 5-7. They are delivered into the power of the king of Mesopotamia, by whom they are enslaved eight years, 8. Othniel is raised up as their deliverer; he discomfits the king of Mesopotamia, delivers Israel, and the land enjoys peace for forty years, 9-11. They again rebel, and are delivered into the hand of the king of Moab, by whom they are enslaved eighteen years, 12-14. They are delivered by Ehud, who kills Eglon, king of Moab, and slays ten thousand Moabites, and the land rests fourscore years, 15-40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *Now these are the nations*** The nations left to prove the Israelites were the five lordships or satrapies of the Philistines, viz., Gath, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza; the Sidonians, the Hivites of Lebanon, Baal-hermon, etc.; with the remains of the Canaanites, viz., the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, and Jebusites. Those who were left to be proved were those Israelites that had not seen all the wars of Canaan.

**Verse 2. *That-Israel might know, to teach them war*** This was another reason why the Canaanites were left in the land, that the Israelites might not forget military discipline, but habituate themselves to the use of arms, that they might always be able to defend themselves against their foes. Had they been faithful to God, they would have had no need of learning the art of war; but now arms became a sort of necessary substitute for that spiritual strength which had departed from them. Thus Gods in his judgments leaves one iniquitous nation to harass and torment another. Were all to turn to God, men need learn war no more.

**Verse 4. *To know whether they would hearken*** This would be the consequence of the Canaanites being left among them: if they should be faithful to God, their enemies would not be able to enslave them; should they be rebellious, the Lord would abandon them to their foes.



**Verse 6. *And they took their daughters*** They formed matrimonial alliances with those proscribed nations, served their idols, and thus became one with them in politics and religion.

**Verse 7. *Served Baalim and the groves*** No groves were ever worshipped, but the deities who were supposed to be resident in them; and in many cases temples and altars were built in groves, and the superstition of consecrating groves and woods to the honor of the deities was a practice very usual with the ancients. Pliny assures us that trees, in old times, served for the temples of the gods. Tacitus reports this custom of the old Germans; Quintus Curtius, of the Indians; and Caesar, and our old writers, mention the same of the Druids in Britain. The Romans were admirers of this way of worship and therefore had their luci or groves in most parts of the city, dedicated to some deity. But it is very probable that the word אֲשֵׁרֹת asheroth which we translate groves, is a corruption of the word עֲשֵׁתְרוֹת ashtaroth, the moon or Venus, (see on Judges 2:13, ) which only differs in the letters תּ, ע, from the former. Ashtaroth is read in this place by the Chaldee Targum, the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Vulgate, and by one of Dr. Kennicott's MSS.

**Verse 8. *Chushan-rishathaim*** Kushan, the wicked or impious; and so the word is rendered by the Chaldee Targum, the Syriac, and the Arabic, wherever it occurs in this chapter.

**King of Mesopotamia** King of אֲרָם נַהֲרַיִם Aram naharayim, "Syria of the two rivers;" translated Mesopotamia by the Septuagint and Vulgate. It was the district situated between the Tigris and Euphrates, called by the Arabian geographers Maverannaher, "the country beyond the river," it is now called Diarbek. See the note on Acts 2:9.

**Served Chushan-eight years.** He overran their country, and forced them to pay a very heavy tribute.

**Verse 9. *Raised up-Othniel, the son of Kenaz*** This noble Hebrew was of the tribe of Judah, and nephew and son-in-law to Caleb, whose praise stands without abatement in the sacred records. Othniel had already signalized his valor in taking Kirjath-sepher, which appears to have been a very hazardous exploit. By his natural valor, experience in war, and the peculiar influence of the Divine Spirit, he was well qualified to inspire his

countrymen with courage, and to lead them successfully against their oppressors.

**Verse 10. *His hand prevailed*** We are not told or what nature this war was, but it was most decisive; and the consequence was an undisturbed peace of forty years, during the whole life of Othniel. By the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him, the Chaldee understands the spirit of prophecy; others understand the spirit of fortitude and extraordinary courage, as opposed to the spirit of fear or faintness of heart; but as Othniel was judge, and had many offices to fulfill besides that of a general, he had need of the Spirit of God, in the proper sense of the word, to enable him to guide and govern this most refractory and fickle people; and his receiving it for these purposes, shows that the political state of the Jews was still a theocracy. No man attempted to do any thing in that state without the immediate inspiration of God, the pretension to which was always justified by the event.

**Verse 12. *The children of Israel did evil*** They forgot the Lord and became idolaters, and God made those very people, whom they had imitated in their idolatrous worship, the means of their chastisement.

***The Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab*** The success he had against the Israelites was by the especial appointment and energy of God. He not only abandoned the Israelites, but strengthened the Moabites against them. Eglon is supposed to have been the immediate successor of Balak. Some great men have borne names which, when reduced to their grammatical meaning, appear very ridiculous: the word **עגלו** Eglon signifies a little calf!

**Verse 13. *The city of palm trees.*** This the Targum renders the city of Jericho; but Jericho had been destroyed by Joshua, and certainly was not rebuilt till the reign of Ahab, long after this, 1 Kings 16:34. However, as Jericho is expressly called the city of palm trees, Deuteronomy 34:3, the city in question must have been in the vicinity or plain of Jericho, and the king of Moab had seized it as a frontier town contiguous to his own estates. Calmet supposes that the city of palm trees means En-gaddi.

**Verse 15. *Ehud the son of Gera-a man left handed*** **ימינו איש אטר יד** ish itter yad yemino, a man lame in his right hand, and therefore obliged to

use his left. The Septuagint render it *ανδρα αμφοτεροδεξιον*, an ambidexter, a man who could use both hands alike. The Vulgate, *qui utraque manu pro dextera utebatur*, a man who could use either hand as a right hand, or to whom right and left were equally ready. This is not the sense of the original, but it is the sense in which most interpreters understand it. It is well known that to be an ambidexter was in high repute among the ancients: Hector boasts of it: —

*αυταρ εγων εν οιδα μαχας τ', ανδροκτασιας τε  
οιδ' επι δεξια, οιδ' επ' αριστερα νωμησαι βων  
αζαλην, το μοι εστι ταλαυρινον πολεμιζειν.*

*Iliad*, lib. vii., ver. 237.

*“But am in arms well practiced; many a Greek  
Hath bled by me, and I can shift my shield  
From right to left; reserving to the last  
Force that suffices for severest toil.”*

COWPER.

Asteropaeus is also represented by Homer as an ambidexter, from which he derives great advantages in fight: —

*’ως φατ’ απειλησας ο δ’ ανεσχετο διος αχιλλευς  
πηλιαδα μελιην ο δ’ ομαρτη δουρασιν αμφις  
’ηρωσ αστεροπαιος, επει περιδεξιος ηε.*

*Iliad*, lib. xxi., ver. 161.

*So threatened he. Then raised Achilles high  
The Pelian ash:—and his two spears at once  
Alike, (a practiced warrior,) with both hands  
Asteropaeus hurled.”*

COWPER.

We are informed by Aristotle, that Plato recommended to all soldiers to acquire by study and exercise an equal facility of losing both hands.

Speaking of Plato, he says: **και την εν τοις πολεμικοις, οπως αμφιδεξιοι γινωνται κατα την μελετην, ως δεον μη την μεν χρησιμον ειναι ταιν χερσιν, την δε αχρηστον.** — Deuteronomy Repub., lib. ii., cap. 12. “He (Plato) also made a law concerning their warlike exercises, that they should acquire a habit of using both hands alike; as it is not fit that one of the hands should be useful and the other useless.” In Judges 20:16 of this book we have an account of seven hundred men of Benjamin, each of whom was **אִטֵּר יָד יְמִינֹו** itter yad yemino, lame of his right hand, and yet slinging stones to a hair’s breadth without missing: these are generally thought to be ambidexters.

**Sent a present unto Eglon** This is generally understood to be the tribute money which the king of Moab had imposed on the Israelites.

**Verse 16. A dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length** The word **גֹּמֵד** gomed, which we translate cubit, is of very doubtful signification. As the root seems to signify contracted, it probably means an instrument made for the purpose shorter than usual, and something like the Italian stiletto. The Septuagint translate it by **σπιθαμη**, a span, and most of the versions understand it in the same sense.

**Upon his right thigh.** Because he was left-handed. Ordinarily the sword is on the left side, that it may be readily drawn out by the right hand; but as Ehud was left-handed, to be convenient his sword must be on the right side.

**Verse 17. Eglon was a very fat man.** The **אִישׁ בָּרִיא** ish bari of the text is translated by the Septuagint **ανηρ αστειος σφοδρα**, a very beautiful or polite man, and in the Syriac, a very rude man. It probably means what we call lusty or corpulent.

**Verse 18. Made an end to offer the present** Presents, tribute, etc., in the eastern countries were offered with very great ceremony; and to make the more parade several persons, ordinarily slaves, sumptuously dressed, and in considerable number, were employed to carry what would not be a burden even to one. This appears to have been the case in the present instance.

**Verse 19. *He-turned-from the quarries*** פסילים pesilim. Some of the versions understand this word as meaning idols or graven images, or some spot where the Moabites had a place of idolatrous worship. As פסל pasal signifies to cut, hew, or engrave, it may be applied to the images thus cut, or to the place, or quarry whence they were digged: but it is most likely that idols are meant. Some think that trenches are meant, and that pesilim here may mean the boundaries of the two countries: and when Ehud had got thus far, he sent away the people that were with him, under pretense of having a secret message to Eglon, and so got rid of his attendants, in presence of whom he could not have executed his scheme, nor have secured his escape afterwards. But I do not see the evidence of this mode of interpretation.

**Verse 20. *He was sitting in a summer parlor*** Besides the platforms, says Dr. Shaw, which were upon the ancient houses of the East, and which are found there to this day, it is probable that heretofore, as well as at present, most of the great houses had a smaller one annexed, which seldom consisted of more than one or two rooms and a terrace. Others, built as they frequently are above the porch or gateway, have, if we except the ground-floor, all the conveniences belonging to the house, properly so called. There is a door of communication from them into the gallery of the house, kept open or shut at the discretion of the master of the house, besides another door which opens immediately from a privy stairs down into the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house. In these back houses strangers are usually lodged and entertained; hither the men are wont to retire from the hurry and noise of their families, to be more at leisure for meditation or diversions; and they are often used for wardrobes and magazines. These the Arabs call oleah, which exactly answers to the Hebrew word עליית aliyath found in this place; and without doubt such was the apartment in which Eglon received Ehud, by the privy stairs belonging to which he escaped, after having killed Eglon. The doors of the Eastern buildings are large, and their chambers spacious, conveniences well adapted to those hotter climates; but in the present passage something more seems to be meant; at least there are now other conveniences in the East to give coolness to particular rooms, which are very common. In Egypt the cooling their rooms is effected by openings at the top, which let in the fresh air. Mons. Maillet informs us that their halls

are made very large and lofty, with a dome at the top, which towards the north has several open windows, so constructed as to throw the north wind down into the rooms; and by this means, though the country is excessively hot, they can make the coolness of those apartments so great, as often not to be borne without being wrapped in furs. Eglon's was a chamber; and some contrivance to mitigate the heat of it was the more necessary, as he appears to have kept his court at Jericho, Ju 3:13, 28, where the heat is so excessive as sometimes to prove fatal. See Harmer's Observations.

*I have a message from God unto thee* דבר אלהים לי אליך debar elohim li aleycha, a word of the gods to me, unto thee. It is very likely that the word elohim is used here to signify idols, or the pesilim mentioned above, Judges 3:19. Ehud, having gone so far as this place of idolatry, might feign he had there been worshipping, and that the pesilim had inspired him with a message for the king; and this was the reason why the king commanded silence, why every man went out, and why he rose from his seat or throne, that he might receive it with the greater respect. This, being an idolater, he would not have done to any message coming from the God of Israel. I have a message from God unto thee is a popular text: many are fond of preaching from it. Now as no man should ever depart from the literal meaning of Scripture in his preaching, we may at once see the absurdity of taking such a text as this; for such preachers, to be consistent, should carry a two-edged dagger of a cubit length on their right thigh, and be ready to thrust it into the bowels of all those they address! This is certainly the literal meaning of the passage, and that it has no other meaning is an incontrovertible truth.

**Verse 22. The haft also went in after the blade** As the instrument was very short, and Eglon very corpulent, this might readily take place.

**And the dirt came out** This is variously understood: either the contents of the bowels issued through the wound, or he had an evacuation in the natural way through the fright and anguish. The original, פרשדונה, parshedonah, occurs only here, and is supposed to be compounded of פרש peresh, dung, and שדה shadah, to shed, and may be very well applied to the latter circumstance; so the Vulgate understood it: Statinque per secreta naturae alvi stercora proruperunt.

**Verse 24. *He covereth his feet*** He has lain down on his sofa in order to sleep; when this was done they dropped their slippers, lifted up their feet, and covered them with their long loose garments. But the versions, in general, seem to understand it as implying a certain natural act.

**Verse 26. *Passed beyond the quarries*** Beyond the pesilim, which appear to have been the Moabitish borders, where they had set up those hewn stones as landmarks, or sacred boundary stones.

**Verse 28. *Took the fords of Jordan*** It is very likely that the Moabites, who were on the western side of Jordan, hearing of the death of Eglon, were panic-struck, and endeavored to escape over Jordan at the fords near Jericho, when Ehud blew his trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and thus to get into the land of the Moabites, which lay on the east of Jordan; but Ehud and his men, seizing the only pass by which they could make their escape, slew ten thousand of them in their attempt to cross at those fords. What is called here the fords was doubtless the place where the Israelites had passed Jordan when they (under Joshua) took possession of the promised land.

**Verse 29. *All lusty, and all men of valor*** Picked, chosen troops, which Eglon kept among the Israelites to reduce and overawe them.

**Verse 30. *The land had rest fourscore years.*** This is usually reckoned from the deliverance under Othniel, that being a term from which they dated every transaction, as in other cases they dated from the exodus, from the building of Solomon's temple, etc., and as other nations did from particular events: the ROMANS, from the building of the city; the MOHAMMEDANS, from the Hijreh, or flight of Mohammed to Medina; the CHRISTIANS, from the birth of Christ, etc., etc. But see the preface, and the different chronological schemes there mentioned.

**Verse 31. *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath*** Dr. Hales supposes that "Shamgar's administration in the West included Ehud's administration of eighty years in the East; and that, as this administration might have been of some continuance, so this Philistine servitude which is not noticed elsewhere, might have been of some duration; as may be incidentally collected from Deborah's thanksgiving, Judges 5:6."

*Slew-six hundred men with an ox-goad* מלמד הבקר malmad habbakar, the instructor of the oxen. This instrument is differently understood by the versions: the Vulgate has vomere, with the coulter or ploughshare, a dreadful weapon in the hand of a man endued with so much strength; the Septuagint has *αροτροποδι των βοων*, with the ploughshare of the oxen; the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, understand it of the goad, as does our translation. 1. THAT the ox-goad, still used in Palestine, is a sufficiently destructive weapon if used by a strong and skillful hand, is evident enough from the description which Mr. Maundrell gives of this implement, having seen many of them both in Palestine and Syria: “It was observable,” says he, “that in ploughing they used goads of an extraordinary size; upon measuring of several I found them about eight feet long, and at the bigger end about six inches in circumference. They were armed at the lesser end with a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end with a small spade or paddle of iron, strong and massy, for cleansing the plough from the clay that encumbers it in working.” See his Journey from Aleppo, etc., 7th edit., pp. 110, 111. In the hands of a strong, skillful man, such an instrument must be more dangerous and more fatal than any sword. It is worthy of remark that the ox-goad is represented by Homer to have been used prior to this time in the same way. In the address of Diomed to Glaucus, Iliad. lib. vi., ver. 129, Lycurgus is represented as discomfiting Bacchus and the Bacchanals with this weapon. The siege of Troy, according to the best chronologers, happened within the time of the Israelitish judges.

οὐκ ἂν ἐγῶγε θεοῖσιν ἐπουρανοῖσι μάχοιμην  
οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ δρυαντοῦ υἱὸς κραιτερός λυκούργος

σευε κατ’ ἠγαθεὸν νύσσητον αἰ δ’ ἄμα πασαι  
θυσθλα χαμαι κατεχευαν, ὑπ’ ἀνδροφονοιο  
λυκούργου  
θεινομεναι βουπληγι.



*“I fight not with the inhabitants of heaven;  
That war Lycurgus, son of Dryas, waged,  
Nor long survived. — From Nyssa’s sacred heights  
He drove the nurses of the frantic god,  
Thought drowning Bacchus: to the ground they cast  
All cast, their leafy wands; while, ruthless, he  
Spared not to smite them with his murderous goad.”*

The meaning of this fable is: Lycurgus, king of Thrace, finding his subjects addicted to drunkenness, proscribed the cultivation of the vine in his dominions, and instituted agriculture in its stead; thus **θυσθλα**, the thyrsi, were expelled, **βουπληγι**, by the ox-goad. The account, however, shows that Shamgar was not the only person who used the ox-goad as an offensive weapon. If we translate **βουπληξ** a cart-whip, the parallel is lost. 2. It appears that Shamgar was merely a laboring man; that the Philistines were making an inroad on the Israelites when the latter were cultivating their fields; that Shamgar and his neighbors successfully resisted them; that they armed themselves with their more portable agricultural instruments; and that Shamgar, either with a ploughshare or an ox-goad, slew six hundred of those marauders. 3. The case of Ehud killing Eglon is a very serious one; and how far he was justified in this action is with all a question of importance, and with not a few a question of difficulty. “Is it right to slay a tyrant?” I, without hesitation, answer, No individual has a right to slay any man, except it be in his own defense, when a person attacks him in order to take away his life. “But may not any of his oppressed subjects put an end to the life of a tyrant?” No. The state alone can judge whether a king is ruling contrary to the laws and constitution of that state; and if that state have provided laws for the punishment of a ruler who is endeavoring to destroy or subvert that constitution, then let him be dealt with according to those laws. But no individual or number of individuals in that state has any right to dispose of the life of the ruler but according to law. To take his life in any other way is no less than murder. It is true God, the author of life and the judge of all men, may commission one man to take away the life of a tyrant. But the pretension to such a commission must be strong, clear, and unequivocal; in short, if a man think he have such a commission, to be safe, he should require the Lord to give

him as full an evidence of it as he did to Moses; and when such a person comes to the people, they should require him to give as many proofs of his Divine call as the Hebrews did Moses, before they should credit his pretensions. "But had not Ehud a Divine call?" I cannot tell. If he had, he did not murder Eglon; if he had not, his act, however it succeeded, was a murderous act; and if he had no message from God, (and there is no proof that he had,) then he was a most base and hypocritical assassin. The sacred historian says nothing of his motives nor call; he mentions simply the fact, and leaves it without either observation or comment, and every reader is left to draw his own inference. The life of any ruler can only be at the disposal of the constitution, or that system of rules, laws, and regulations, by which the people he rules should be governed; if he rule not according to these, he is, ipso facto, deposed from his government. If he break the constitution, to the great injury or ruin of his subjects, then he is to be judged by those laws according to which he must have pledged himself to govern. If a king be deposed on any other account, it is rebellion. If his life be taken away by any means but those provided by the constitution, it is murder. No pretended or proved tyranny can justify his being taken off in any other way, or on any other account. And what constitution in the civilized world provides for the death of the supreme magistrate? It is true the good people, as they were called, of England and France, have each under a pretense of law, beheaded their king; and they endeavored to justify their conduct on the ground that those kings had broken the constitution: this being proved, they should have been deposed. But by what law, either of those nations or of the civilized world, were their lives taken away? Let it be remembered that the inflation of the punishment of death, either against or without law, is murder.

## CHAPTER 4

*The Israelites again rebel against God, and they are delivered into the hands of Jabin, king of Canaan, 1, 2. They cry unto God, and he raises up Deborah and Barak to deliver them, 3-10. Some account of Heber the Kenite, 11. Barak attacks Sisera, captain of Jabin's army, at the river Kishon, and gives him a total overthrow, 12-16. Sisera leaves his chariot, and flies away on foot; enters the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, by whom he is slain, while secreting himself in her apartment, 17-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1. *When Ehud was dead.*** Why not when Shamgar was dead? Does this not intimate that Shamgar was not reckoned in the number of the judges?

**Verse 2. *Jabin king of Canaan*** Probably a descendant of the Jabin mentioned Joshua 11:1, etc., who had gathered together the wrecks of the army of that Jabin defeated by Joshua. Calmet supposes that these Canaanites had the dominion over the tribes of Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar; while Deborah judged in Ephraim, and Shamgar in Judah.

**Verse 3. *Nine hundred chariots of iron*** Chariots armed with iron scythes, as is generally supposed; they could not have been made all of iron, but they might have been shod with iron, or had iron scythes projecting from the axle on each side, by which infantry might be easily cut down or thrown into confusion. The ancient Britons are said to have had such chariots.

**Verse 4. *Deborah, a prophetess*** One on whom the Spirit of God descended, and who was the instrument of conveying to the Israelites the knowledge of the Divine will, in things sacred and civil.

***She judged Israel*** This is, I believe, the first instance of gynaecocracy, or female government, on record. Deborah seems to have been supreme both in civil and religious affairs; and Lapidoth, her husband, appears to have

had no hand in the government. But the original may as well be translated a woman of Lapidoth, as the wife of Lapidoth.

**Verse 5. *The palm tree of Deborah*** It is common for the Hindoos to plant trees in the names of themselves and their friends; and some religious mendicants live for a considerable time under trees. — Ward.

**Verse 6. *She sent and called Barak*** She appointed him to be general of the armies on this occasion; which shows that she possessed the supreme power in the state.

**Mount Tabor** “Mount Tabor,” says Maundrell, “stands by itself, about two or three furlongs within the plains of Esdraelon. It has a plain area at the top, both fertile and delicious of an oval figure, extending about one furlong in breadth, and two in length. The prospect from the top is beautiful: on the N.W. is the Mediterranean; and all around you have the spacious plains of Esdraelon and Galilee, which present you with a view of many places famous for the resort and miracles of the Son of God. At the bottom of Tabor, westward, stands Daberah, a small village, supposed to have taken its name from Deborah. Near this valley is the brook Kishon. During the rainy season, all the water that falls on the eastern side of the mountain, or upon the rising ground to the southward, empties itself into it, in a number of torrents: at which conjuncture it overflows its banks, acquires a wonderful rapidity, and carries all before it. It might be at such a time as this when the stars are said to fight against Sisera, Judges 5:20, 21, by bringing an abundance of rain, whereby the Kishon became so high and rapid as to sweep away the host of Sisera, in attempting to ford it.” See Maundrell and Shaw. This mountain is very difficult of ascent; it took Mr. Maundrell nearly an hour to reach the top; this, with its grand area on the summit, made a very proper place for the rendezvous of Barak’s army. Antiochus used it for the same purpose in his wars; and Josephus appears to have fortified it; and Placidus, one of Vespasian’s generals, was sent to reduce it. See more in Calmet.

**Verse 9. *The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.*** Does not this mean, If I go with thee, the conquest shall be attributed to me, and thou wilt have no honor? Or, is it a prediction of the exploit of Jael? In both these senses the words have been understood. It seems, however, more likely that Jael is intended. The Septuagint made a remarkable

addition to the speech of Barak: “If thou wilt go with me I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go; **’οτι ουκ οίδα την ημεραν εν η ευοδοι κυριος τον αγγελον μετ’ εμου**, because I know not the day in which the Lord will send his angel to give me success.” By which he appears to mean, that although he was certain of a Divine call to this work, yet, as he knew not the time in which it would be proper for him to make the attack, he wishes that Deborah, on whom the Divine Spirit constantly rested, would accompany him to let him know when to strike that blow, which he knew would be decisive. This was quite natural, and quite reasonable, and is no impeachment whatever of Barak’s faith. St. Ambrose and St. Augustine have the same reading; but it is found in no MS. nor in any other of the versions. See Judges 4:14.

**Verse 10. *Ten thousand men at his feet*** Ten thousand footmen. He had no chariots; his army was all composed of infantry.

**Verse 11. *Hohab the father-in-law of Moses*** For a circumstantial account of this person, and the meaning of the original word **חַוִּי** chothen, which is translated son-in-law in Genesis 19:14, see the notes on Exodus 2:15, 16, 18; 3:1; 4:20, 24; 18:5.

**Verse 14. *Up; for this is the day*** This is exactly the purpose for which the Septuagint state, Judges 4:8, that Barak wished Deborah to accompany him. “I know not,” says he, “**THE DAY** in which God will send his angel to give me prosperity: come thou with we that thou mayest direct me in this respect.” She went, and told him the precise time in which he was to make the attack: **Up, for THIS is the DAY** in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand.

***Went down from Mount Tabor*** He had probably encamped his men on and near the summit of this mount. See the note on Judges 4:6.

**Verse 15. *The Lord discomfited Sisera*** **וַיַּחֲזֶק יְהוָה** vayiahom Jehovah; the Lord **CONFOUNDED**, threw them all into confusion, drove them pell-mell-caused chariots to break and overthrow chariots, and threw universal disorder into all their ranks. In this case Barak and his men had little to do but kill and pursue, and Sisera in order to escape, was obliged to abandon his chariot. There is no doubt all this was done by supernatural agency; God sent his angel and confounded them.

**Verse 18. *Jael went out to meet Sisera*** He preferred the woman's tent because of secrecy; for, according to the etiquette of the eastern countries, no person ever intrudes into the apartments of the women. And in every dwelling the women have a separate apartment.

**Verse 19. *She opened a bottle of milk*** She gave more than he requested; and her friendship increased his confidence and security.

**Verse 20. *Stand in the door of the tent*** As no man would intrude into the women's apartment without permission, her simply saying, there is no man in my tent, would preclude all search.

**Verse 21. *A nail of the tent*** One of the spikes by which they fasten to the ground the cords which are attached to the cloth or covering.

***He was fast asleep and weary.*** As he lay on one side, and was overwhelmed with sleep through the heat and fatigues of the day, the piercing of his temples must have in a moment put him past resistance.

**Verse 22. *Behold, Sisera lay dead*** What impression this made on the victorious Barak is not said: it could not give him much pleasure, especially when he learned the circumstances of his death.

**Verse 24. *The hand of the children of Israel prospered*** הלויך ותלך  
vattelech haloch, it went, going-they followed up this victory, and the consequence was, they utterly destroyed Jabin and his kingdom. IT will naturally be expected that something should be said to justify the conduct of Jael: it must be owned that she slew Sisera in circumstances which caused the whole transaction to appear exceedingly questionable. They are the following: — 1. There was peace between her family and the king of Canaan. 2. That peace was no doubt made, as all transactions of the kind were, with a sacrifice and an oath. 3. Sisera, knowing this, came to her tent with the utmost confidence. 4. She met him with the most friendly greetings and assurances of safety. 5. Having asked for water, to show her friendship and respect she gave him cream, and that in a vessel suitable to his dignity. 6. She put him in the secret part of her own tent, and covered him in such a way as to evidence her good faith, and to inspire him with the greater confidence. 7. She agreed to keep watch at the door, and deny his being there to any that might inquire. 8. As she gave him permission to secrete himself with her, and gave him refreshment, she was bound by the

rules of Asiatic hospitality to have defended his life, even at the risk of her own. 9. Notwithstanding, she took the advantage of his weariness and deep sleep, and took away his life! 10. She exulted in her deed, met Barak, and showed him in triumph what she had done. Now do we not find, in all this, bad faith, deceit, deep hypocrisy, lying, breach of treaty, contempt of religious rites, breach of the laws of hospitality, deliberate and unprovoked murder? But what can be said in her justification? All that can be said, and all that has been said is simply this: "She might have been sincere at first, but was afterwards Divinely directed to do what she did." If this was so, she is sufficiently vindicated by the fact; for God has a right to dispose of the lives of his creatures as he pleases: and probably the cup of Sisera's iniquity was full, and his life already forfeited to the justice of God. But does it appear that she received any such direction from God? There is no sufficient evidence of it: it is true that Deborah, a prophetess, declares her blessed above women; and this seems to intimate that her conduct was pleasing to God. If Deborah was inspired on this occasion, her words are a presumptive proof that the act was right; unless we are to understand it as a simple declaration of the reputation she should be held in among her own sex. But we do not find one word from Jael herself, stating how she was led to do an act repugnant to her feelings as a woman, contrary to good faith, and a breach of the rules of hospitality. Nor does the sacred penman say one word to explain the case; as in the case of Ehud, he states the fact, and leaves his readers to form their own opinion. To say, as has been said in the case of Eglon, that "Sisera was a public enemy, and any of the people whom he oppressed might be justified in taking away his life," is a very dangerous position, as it refers one of the most solemn acts of judgment and justice to the caprice, or prejudice, or enthusiastic feeling of every individual who may persuade himself that he is not only concerned in the business, but authorized by God to take vengeance by his own hand. While justice and law are in the world, God never will, as he never did, abandon cases of this kind to the caprice, prejudice, or party feeling, of any man. The conduct of Ehud and Jael are before the tribunal of God: I will not justify, I dare not absolutely condemn; there I leave them, and entreat my readers to do the like; after referring them to the observations at the end of the preceding chapter, where the subject is considered more at large.

## CHAPTER 5

*The triumphant song of Deborah and Barak, after the defeat of Sisera, captain of the armies of Jabin, king of Canaan.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *Then sang Deborah, and Barak*** There are many difficulties in this very sublime song; and learned men have toiled much to remove them. That there are several gross mistakes in our version will be instantly acknowledged by all who can critically examine the original. Dr. Kennicott has distributed it into parts, assigned to Deborah and Barak alternately. But his division is by far too artificial. Dr. Hales has also given a version of it which, perhaps, comes nearer to the simplicity of the original; but it also leaves several difficulties behind. As these are the two best versions I have met with, I shall lay them both in parallel columns before the reader, after introducing the general description of this song, given by each of these learned men. These the reader will find at the conclusion of the chapter.

**Verse 2. *For the avenging of Israel*** See the notes, etc., at the end of the chapter.

**Verse 4. *When thou wentest out of Seir*** Here is an allusion to the giving of the law, and the manifestation of God's power and glory at that time; and as this was the most signal display of his majesty and mercy in behalf of their forefathers, Deborah very properly begins her song with a commemoration of this transaction.

**Verse 6. *The highways were unoccupied*** The land was full of anarchy and confusion, being everywhere infested with banditti. No public road was safe; and in going from place to place, the people were obliged to use unfrequented paths.

**Verse 7. *The villages ceased*** The people were obliged to live together in fortified places; or in great numbers, to protect each other against the incursions of bands of spoilers.



**Verse 8. *They chose new gods*** This was the cause of all their calamities; they forsook Jehovah, and served other gods; and then was war in their gates—they were hemmed up in every place, and besieged in all their fortified cities; and they were defenseless, they had no means of resisting their adversaries; for even among forty thousand men, there was neither spear nor shield to be seen. The Vulgate gives a strange and curious turn to this verse: *Nova bella elegit Dominus, et portas hostium ipse subvertit*; “The Lord chose a new species of war, and himself subverted the gates of the enemy.” Now, what was this new species of war? A woman signifies her orders to Barak; he takes 10, 000 men, wholly unarmed, and retires to Mount Tabor, where they are immediately besieged by a powerful and well-appointed army. On a sudden Barak and his men rush upon them, terror and dismay are spread through the whole Cannanitish army, and the rout is instantaneous and complete. The Israelites immediately arm themselves with the arms of their enemies, and slay all before them; they run, and are pursued in all directions. Sisera, their general, is no longer safe in his chariot; either his horses fail, or the unevenness of the road obliges him to desert it, and fly away on foot; in the end, the whole army is destroyed, and the leader ingloriously slain. This was a new species of war, and was most evidently the Lord’s doings. Whatever may be said of the version of the Vulgate, (and the Syriac and Arabic are something like it,) the above are all facts, and show the wondrous working of the Lord.

**Verse 10. *Ye that ride on white asses*** Perhaps **אתנות צהרות** *athonoth tsechoroth* should be rendered sleek or well-fed asses; rendered *asinos nitentes*, shining asses, by the Vulgate.

***Ye that sit in judgment*** **שבי על מדי** *yoshebey al middin*; some have rendered this, ye who dwell in Middin. This was a place in the tribe of Judah, and is mentioned Joshua 15:61.

***And walk by the way.*** Persons who go from place to place for the purposes of traffic.

**Verse 11. *In the places of drawing water*** As wells were very scarce in every part of the East, and travelers in such hot countries must have water, robbers and banditti generally took their stations near tanks, pools, and springs, in order that they might suddenly fall upon those who came to

drink; and when the country was badly governed, annoyances of this kind were very frequent. The victory gained now by the Israelites put the whole country under their own government, and the land was cleansed from such marauders. Dr. Shaw, in his account of the sea-coast of the Mauritania Caesariensis, page 20, mentions a beautiful rill of water that runs into a basin of Roman workmanship, called shrub we krub, “drink and be off,” because of the danger of meeting with assassins in the place. Instead of such danger and insecurity, Deborah intimates that they may sit down at the place of drawing water, and there rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord; the land being now everywhere in peace, order and good government being restored.

***Go down to the gates*** They may go down to the gates to receive judgment and justice as usual. It is well known that the gate was the place of judgment in the East.

**Verse 12. *Lead thy captivity captive*** Make those captives who have formerly captivated us.

**Verse 13. *Make him that remaineth*** This appears to be spoken of Barak, who is represented as being only a remnant of the people.

**Verse 14. *Out of Ephraim—a root of them*** Deborah probably means that out of Ephraim and Benjamin came eminent warriors. Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, routed the Amalekites a short time after the Israelites came out of Egypt, Exodus 17:10. Ehud, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, slew Eglon, and defeated the Moabites, the friends and allies of the Ammonites and Amalekites. Machir, in the land of Gilead, produced eminent warriors; and Zebulun produced eminent statesmen, and men of literature. Probably Deborah speaks here of the past wars, and not of any thing that was done on this occasion; for we know that no persons from Gilead were present in the war between Jabin and Israel. See Judges 5:17. Gilead abode beyond Jordan.

**Verse 15. *The princes of Issachar*** They were at hand and came willingly forth, at the call of Deborah, to this important war. Barak—was sent on foot I have no doubt that **ברגליו**, without regarding the points, should be translated with his footmen or infantry. Thus the Alexandrian Septuagint understood it, rendering the clause thus: **οὕτω βαρακ εξαπεστειλεν**

πεζους αυτου εις την κοιλαδα, “Barak also sent forth his footmen into the valley.” Luther has perfectly hit the meaning, Barak mit seinen fussvoleke, “Barak with his footmen.”

***For the divisions of Reuben*** Either the Reubenites were divided among themselves into factions, which prevented their co-operation with their brethren, or they were divided in their judgment concerning the measures now to be pursued, which prevented them from joining with the other tribes till the business was entirely settled. The thoughts of heart, and searchings of heart, might refer to the doubts and uneasiness felt by the other tribes, when they found the Reubenites did not join them; for they might have conjectured that they were either unconcerned about their liberty, or were meditating a coalition with the Canaanites.

**Verse 17. *Gilead abode beyond Jordan*** That is, the Gadites, who had their lot in those parts, and could not well come to the aid of their brethren at a short summons. But the words of Deborah imply a criminal neglect on the part of the Danites; they were intent upon their traffic, and trusted in their ships. Joppa was one of their sea-ports.

***Asher continued on the seashore*** The lot of Asher extended along the Mediterranean Sea; and being contiguous to Zebulun and Naphtali, they might have easily succoured their brethren; but they had the pretense that their posts were unguarded, and they abode in their breaches, in order to defend them.

**Verse 18. *Zebulun and Naphtali-jeoparded their lives*** The original is very emphatic, חרפ נפשו למות, chereph naphsho lamuth, they desolated their lives to death—they were determined to conquer or die, and therefore plunged into the thickest of the battle. The word jeoparded is a silly French term, and comes from the exclamation of a disappointed gamester: Jeu perdu! The game is lost; or J’ai perdue! I have lost.

**Verse 19. *The kings came and fought*** It is conjectured that Jabin and his confederates had invaded Manasseh, as both Taanach and Megiddo were in that tribe: and that they were discomfited by the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali at Taanach and Megiddo; while Barak defeated Sisera at Mount Tabor.

***They took no gain of money*** They expected much booty in the total rout of the Israelites; but they were defeated, and got no prey; or, if applied to the Israelites, They fought for liberty, not for plunder.

**Verse 20. *They fought from heaven*** The angels of God came to the assistance of Israel: and the stars in their orbits fought against Sisera; probably some thunder storm, or great inundation from the river Kishon, took place at that time, which in poetic language was attributed to the stars. So our poet sung relative to the storms which dispersed the Spanish armada in 1588: —

***“Both winds and waves at once conspire  
To aid old England-frustrate Spain’s desire.”***

Perhaps it means no more than this: the time which was measured and ruled by the heavenly bodies seemed only to exist for the destruction of the Canaanites. There may be also a reference to the sun and moon standing still in the days of Joshua.

**Verse 21. *The river of Kishon swept them away*** This gives plausibility to the above conjecture, that there was a storm at this time which produced an inundation in the river Kishon, which the routed Canaanites attempting to ford were swept away.

**Verse 22. *Then were the horsehoofs broken*** In very ancient times horses were not shod; nor are they to the present day in several parts of the East. Sisera had iron chariots when his hosts were routed; the horses that drew these, being strongly urged on by those who drove them, had their hoofs broken by the roughness of the roads; in consequence of which they became lame, and could not carry off their riders. This is marked as one cause of their disaster.

**Verse 23. *Curse ye Meroz*** Where Meroz was is not known; some suppose it was the same as Merom, nigh to Dotham. The Syriac and Arabic have Merod; but where this was is equally uncertain. It was certainly some city or district, the inhabitants of which would not assist in this war.

***Curse ye bitterly*** אָרַר אֲרָר oru aror, curse with cursing-use the most awful execrations.

**Said the angel of the LORD** That is, Barak, who was Jehovah's angel or messenger in this war; the person sent by God to deliver his people.

**To the help of the LORD** That is, to the help of the people of the Lord.

**Against the mighty.** בַּגִּבּוֹרִים baggibborim, "with the heroes;" that is, Barak and his men, together with Zebulun and Naphtali: these were the mighty men, or heroes, with whom the inhabitants of Meroz would not join.

**Verse 24. Blessed above women shall Jael-be** She shall be highly celebrated as a most heroic woman; all the Israelitish women shall glory in her. I do not understand these words as expressive of the Divine approbation towards Jael. See the observations at the end of Judges 4:24. The word bless, both in Hebrew and Greek, often signifies to praise, to speak well of, to celebrate. This is most probably its sense here.

**Verse 25. She brought forth butter** As the word חֶמָה chemah, here translated butter, signifies disturbed, agitated, etc., it is probable that buttermilk is intended. The Arabs form their buttermilk by agitating the milk in a leathery bag, and the buttermilk is highly esteemed because of its refreshing and cooling quality; but there is no reason why we may not suppose that Jael gave him cream: Sisera was not only thirsty, but was also exhausted with fatigue; and nothing could be better calculated to quench his thirst, and restore his exhausted strength, than a bowl of cream. I am surprised that Mr. Harmer should see any difficulty in this. It is evident that Deborah wishes to convey the idea that Jael was more liberal and kind than Sisera had requested. He asked for water, and she brought him cream; and she brought it to him, not in an ordinary pitcher, but in the most superb dish or bowl which she possessed. See at the end of Judges 4:24.

**Verse 26. She smote off his head** The original does not warrant this translation; nor is it supported by fact. She smote his head, and transfixed him through the temples. It was his head that received the death wound, and the place where this wound was inflicted was the temples. The manner in which Jael despatched Sisera seems to have been this: 1. Observing him to be in a profound sleep she took a workman's hammer, probably a joiner's mallet, and with one blow on the head deprived him of all sense. 2.

She then took a tent nail and drove it through his temples, and thus pinned him to the earth; which she could not have done had she not previously stunned him with the blow on the head. Thus she first smote his head, and secondly pierced his temples.

**Verse 27. At her feet he bowed** **בֵּי רַגְלֶיהָ** *bein ragleyha*, “between her feet.” After having stunned him she probably sat down, for the greater convenience of driving the nail through his temples.

**He bowed-he fell** He probably made some struggles after he received the blow on the head, but could not recover his feet. AEschylus represents Agamemnon rising, staggering, and finally falling, under the blows of Clytemnestra. — Agam. v. 1384.

**Verse 28. Cried through the lattice** This is very natural: in the women’s apartments in the East the windows are latticed, to prevent them from sending or receiving letters, etc. The latticing is the effect of the jealousy which universally prevails in those countries.

**Why is his chariot so long in coming?** Literally, Why is his chariot ashamed to come? Dr. Lowth has very justly observed, that this is a striking image of maternal solicitude, and of a mind divided between hope and fear.

*“The mother of Sisera looked out at a window;  
She cried through the lattice,  
‘Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?’*

“Immediately, impatient of delay, she prevents the comfort of her companions; elate in mind, and bursting forth into female levity and jactation, impotent to hope for any thing, and drunk with her good fortune,

*“Her wise ladies earnestly answered her;  
Yea, she immediately returned answer to herself;  
‘Have they not sped? have they not divided the spoil?’*

“We see how consonant to the person speaking is every idea, every word. She dwells not upon the slaughter of the enemies, the number of the captives, the valor and great exploits of the victor, but, burning with the

female love of spoils, on those things rather which captivate the light mind of the vainest woman; damsels, gold, garments. Nor does she dwell upon them only; but she repeats, she accumulates, she augments every thing. She seems, as it were, to handle the spoils. dwelling as she does on every particular.

*‘Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey?  
A damsel, yea, two damsels to every man:  
To Sisera, a prey of divers colors;  
A prey of divers colors of needlework,  
Finely coloured of needlework on both sides,*

A spoil for adorning the neck.’ To enhance the beauty of this passage, there is, in the poetic conformation of the sentences, an admirable neatness in the diction, great force, splendor, accuracy; in the very redundance of the repetitions the utmost brevity; and, lastly, the most striking disappointment of the woman’s hope, tacitly insinuated by that sudden and unexpected apostrophe,

*‘So let all thine enemies perish, O JEHOVAH!’*

is expressed more fully and strongly by this silence than could have been painted by any colouring of words.” See Dr. Lowth, 13th Prelection, Proverbs 4:18, 19. “We cannot do better,” says Dr. Dodd, “than conclude this chapter with the words of Pelicanus: ‘Let a Homer, or a Virgil, go and compare his poetry, if he be able, with the song of this woman; and, if there be anyone who excels in eloquence and learning, let him celebrate the praises and learning of this panegyric, more copiously than I am able.’” FOR other matters relative to this song I must refer to the two translations which immediately follow; and their authors’ notes on them. Dr. Kennicott says, “This celebrated song of triumph is most deservedly admired; though some parts of it are at present very obscure, and others unintelligible in our English version. Besides particular difficulties, there is a general one that pervades the whole; arising as I humbly apprehend, from its being considered as entirely the song of Deborah. It is certain, though very little attended to, that it is said to have been sung by Deborah and BY BARAK. It is also certain there are in it parts which Deborah could not sing, as well as parts which Barak could not sing; and therefore it seems necessary, in

order to form a better judgment of this song, that some probable distribution should be made of it; whilst those words which seem most likely to have been sung by either party should be assigned to their proper name; either to that of Deborah the prophetess, or to that of Barak the captain. "For example: Deborah could not call upon Deborah, exhorting herself to awake, etc., as in Judges 5:12; neither could Barak exhort himself to arise, etc., in the same verse. Again, Barak could not sing, Till I, Deborah, arose a mother in Israel, Judges 5:7; nor could Deborah sing about a damsel or two for every soldier, Judges 5:30; though, indeed, as to this last article, the words are probably misunderstood. There are other parts also which seem to require a different rendering. Judges 5:2, For the avenging of Israel, where the address is probably to those who took the lead in Israel on this great occasion, for the address in the next words is to those among the people who were volunteers; as again, Judges 5:9. Judges 5:11, 13-15, have many great difficulties. It seems impossible that (Judges 5:23) any person should be cursed for not coming to the help of JEHOVAH; to the help of JEHOVAH against the mighty. Nor does it seem more probable that Jael should, in a sacred song, be styled blessed above women for the death of Sisera. Judges 5:26 mentions butter, of which nothing is said in the history in Judges 4:19; nor does the history say that Jael smote off Sisera's head with a hammer, or indeed that she smote it off at all, as here, Judges 5:26. Lastly, as to Judges 5:30, there being no authority for rendering the words a damsel or two damsels, and the words in Hebrew being very much like two other words in this same verse, which make excellent sense here, it seems highly probable that they were originally the same. And at the end of this verse, which contains an excellent compliment paid to the needlework of the daughters of Israel, and which is here put with great art in the mouth of Sisera's MOTHER, the true sense seems to be, the hopes SHE had of some very rich prize to adorn HER OWN NECK." -Kennicott's Remarks, p. 94. Dr. Hales observes, "That the design of this beautiful ode, which breathes the characteristic softness and luxuriance of female composition, seems to be twofold, religious and political; first, to thank GOD for the recent victory and deliverance of Israel from Canaanitish bondage and oppression; and next, to celebrate the zeal and alacrity with which some of the rulers volunteered their services against the common enemy, and to censure the lukewarmness and apathy of others who stayed at home, and thus betrayed the public cause; and, by



this contrast and exposure, to heal those fatal divisions among the tribes, so injurious to the commonwealth. The first verse, as a title, briefly recites the design or subject of the poem, which consists of eight stanzas. "The first opens with a devout thanksgiving, to which she calls the attention of all, friends and foes. "The second describes, in the sublime imagery of Moses, the magnificent scenes at Mount Sinai, Seir, etc., in the deserts of Arabia, while they were led by the Divine power and presence from Egypt to Canaan. "The third states their offending afterwards by their apostasies in serving new gods, as foretold by Moses, Deuteronomy 32:16, 17, and their consequent oppression by their enemies; the insecurity of travelling, and desertion of the villages, during the twenty years that intervened from the death of Shamgar till Jael's exploit, and till Deborah became judge. By this time they were disarmed by the Philistines and Canaanites, and scarcely a sword or a spear was to be seen in Israel. This policy was adopted by the Philistines in Saul's time, 1 Samuel 13:19, and was probably introduced before, when Shamgar, for want of other weapons, had recourse to an ox-goad, which was only left with them for the purpose of agriculture, 1 Samuel 13:21. "The fourth contrasts their present happy state of security from the incursions and depredations of their foes, especially at the watering places, which were most exposed to attacks; owing to the Divine protection which crowned the victory, the zeal and exertions of 'a remnant of the people,' or a part of the tribes, against the enemy, under her conduct; these were the midland tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, including, perhaps, Judah and Simeon, which bordered on Amalek southward, and Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali, northward. "The fifth censures the recreant tribes Reuben and Gad, beyond Jordan eastward; and Dan and Asher, on the Mediterranean Sea westward, who deserted the common cause in consequence of their divisions, and their paltry attachment to their own concerns. "The sixth records the miraculous defeat of the confederate kings of Canaan, who were swept away by the torrents issuing from the different springs of the river Kishon, swollen by uncommon rains. Meroz was probably a place in the neighborhood. "The seventh contains a panegyric on Jael, who is here 'blessed above women,' for attempting an exploit above her sex to perform; and a picturesque description of her giving Sisera buttermilk to drink, which is considered as a great treat at present among the Arabs. Then follows a minute and circumstantial description of her mode of

slaying him. “The eighth affords an admirable representation of the impatience of the mother of Sisera at his delay in returning; her sanguine anticipation of his success; in which she dwells, not upon the greatness of his exploits, or the slaughter of his enemies, but upon the circumstances most likely to engage a light female mind, such as captive damsels, and embroidered garments, or the spoils of victory, which she repeats and exemplifies with much grace and elegance. “The unexpected and abrupt apostrophe which concludes the poem, So perish all thine enemies, O LORD! tacitly insinuates the utter disappointment of their vain hopes of conquest and spoil more fully and forcibly than any express declaration in words; while it marks the author’s piety, and sole reliance upon the Divine protection of His people, and the glorious prospect of a future and greater deliverance, perhaps, by the Sun of righteousness.” -New Anal. Chron. p. 324.

### DR. KENNICOTT’S VERSION OF THE SONG

1. Then sang Deborah, and Barak the son of Abinoam, saying: —
2. Deb. For the leaders who took the lead in Israel, Bar. For the people who offered themselves willingly, Both. BLESS YE JEHOVAH!
3. Deb. Hear, O ye kings! Bar. Give ear, O ye princes! Deb. I unto JEHOVAH will sing. Bar. I will answer in song to JEHOVAH; Both. THE GOD OF ISRAEL!
4. Deb. O JEHOVAH, at thy going forth from Seir At thy marching from the field of Edom, Bar. The earth trembled, even the heavens poured down. The thick clouds poured down the waters
5. Deb. The mountains melted at JEHOVAH’s presence. Bar. Sinai itself, at the presence of JEHOVAH Both. THE GOD OF ISRAEL!
6. Deb. In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, In the days of Jael, the highways were deserted. Bar. For they who had gone by straight paths, Passed by ways that were very crooked.
7. Deserted were the villages in Israel. Deb. They were deserted till I, Deborah, arose Till I arose a mother in Israel.

8. They chose new gods! Bar. Then, when war was at the gates, Was there a shield seen, or a spear, Among forty thousand in Israel?

9. Deb. My heart is towards the rulers of Israel; Bar. Ye who offered yourselves willingly among the people. Both. BLESS YE JEHOVAH!

10. Deb. Ye who ride upon white asses; Ye who sit upon the seat of judgment

11. Bar. And ye who travel upon the roads, Talk of Him with the voice of praise. Deb. Let them who meet armed at the watering places There show the righteous acts of JEHOVAH, Bar. And the righteousness of the villages of Israel: Then shall they go down to the gates; Both. THE PEOPLE OF JEHOVAH!

12. Bar. Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, lead on the song. Deb. Arise, Barak! and lead thy captivity captive, Barak, thou son of Abinoam.

13. Bar. Then, when the remainder descended after their chiefs, Jehovah's people descended after me, Against the mighty.

14. Deb. Out of Ephraim was their beginning at Mount Amalek; And after thee was Benjamin, against the nations. Bar. From Machir, came masters in the art of war; And from Zebulun, those who threw the dart.

15. Deb. The princes in Issachar were numbered Together with Deborah and Barak. Bar. And Issachar was the guard of Barak, Into the valley sent close at his feet. Deb. At the divisions of Reuben, Great were the impressions of heart.

16. Bar. Why satest thou among the rivulet? What! to hear the bleatings of the flocks? Deb. For the divisions of Reuben, Great were the searchings of heart.

17. Bar. Gad dwelt quietly beyond Jordan; And Dan, why abode he in ships? Deb. Asher continued in the harbour of the seas, And remained among his craggy places.

18. Bar. Zebulun were the people, and Naphtali, Deb. Who exposed their lives unto the death, Both. ON THE HEIGHTS OF THE FIELD.

19. Deb. The kings came, they fought; Then fought the kings of Canaan;  
Bar. At Taanac, above the waters of Megiddo: The plunder of riches they did not receive.
20. Deb. From heaven did they fight; The stars, from their lofty stations,  
Fought against Sisera.
21. Bar. The river Kishon swept them away, The river intercepted them;  
the river Kishon: It was there my soul trod down strength.
22. Deb. It was then the hoofs of the cavalry were battered. By the scamperings,  
the scamperings of its strong steeds.
23. Bar. Curse ye the land of Meroz, Said the messenger of JEHOVAH: Deb.  
Curse ye heavily its inhabitants, Because they came not for help. Both.  
JEHOVAH WAS FOR HELP! JEHOVAH AGAINST THE MIGHTY!
24. Deb. Praised among women will be Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite;  
Among women in the tent will she be praised.
25. Bar. He asked water, she gave him milk; In a princely bowl she brought  
it.
26. Deb. Her left hand she put forth to the nail; And her right hand to the  
workman's hammer. Bar. She struck Sisera, she smote his head; Then she  
struck through, and pierced his temples.
27. Deb. At her feet he bowed, he fell! Bar. At her feet he bowed, he fell!  
Both. WHERE HE BOWED. THERE HE FELL DEAD.
28. Deb. Through the window she looked out and called, Even the mother  
of Sisera, through the lattice; Bar. 'Why is his chariot ashamed to return?  
Why so slow are the steps of his chariot?'
29. Deb. Her wise ladies answered her; Nay, she returned answer to  
herself:
30. Bar. 'Have they not found, divided the spoil; Embroidery, double  
embroidery for the captains' heads! A prize of divers colors for Sisera!'  
Deb. 'A prize of divers colors of embroidery; A colored piece of double  
embroidery for MY NECK, prize!' Chorus, by Deborah and Barak.

31. So perish all thine enemies, O Jehovah! Grand Chorus, by the whole procession. AND LET THOSE WHO LOVE HIM BE AS THE SUN GOING FORTH IN HIS MIGHT.

### DR. HALES'S VERSION OF THE SONG

1. Then sang Deborah, and Barak son of Abinoam on (the victory of) that day, on the avenging of wrongs in Israel:
2. On the volunteering of the people; Saying, BLESS YE THE LORD!
3. Hearken, O kings, (of Canaan,) Give ear, O princes, (of the land:) I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will shout to the Lord, the God of Israel.
4. O Lord, on thy going forth from Seir, On thy marching from the land of Edom, The earth quaked, the heavens dropped The clouds, I say, dropped water.
5. The mountains melted away From the presence of the Lord; Even Sinai himself, from the presence OF THE LORD THE GOD OF ISRAEL.
6. From the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, To the days of Jael, (through fear of the enemy,) The highways were unfrequented, And travellers walked through by-paths.
7. The villages were deserted: They were deserted till I, Deborah, arose, Till I arose (to be) a mother in Israel.
8. (The Israelites) had chosen new gods, Therefore was war in their gates: Was there a shield or a spear to be seen Among forty thousand in Israel?
9. My heart it attached to the senators of Israel, Who volunteered among the people.
10. BLESS YE THE LORD! Ye that ride upon white asses Ye that sit in (the gates of) judgment, Extol (him) ye travelers.
11. (Now freed) from the noise of archers At the watering places, Here shall they rehearse the righteousness OF THE LORD; his righteousness Towards the villages of Israel: Now shall the people of THE LORD Go down to the gates of judgment in safety

12. Awake, awake, Deborah; Awake, awake, utter a song (of praise.) Arise now, Barak; lead thy captivity captive, Thou son of Abinoam.

13. For (God) made a remnant of the people Triumph over the nobles of the enemy; The Lord made me triumph over the mighty.

14. From Ephraim unto Amalek was their root: Next to thee (Ephraim) was Benjamin among thy people: From Machir (Manasseh) came down the senators. And from Zebulun, they that write with the pen of the scribe.

15. The princes in Issachar (were) with Deborah, Even Issachar, as well as Barak, (Naphtali,) He was sent on foot into the valley; For the divisions of Reuben (I feel) great griefs of heart.

16. Why abidest thou among the sheepfolds To hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben (I feel) great griefs of heart.

17. (Why) abode Gilead (Gad) beyond Jordan; And Dan remained in his ships? (Why did) Asher sit in his seaports, And continue in his creeks?

18. (While) the people of Zebulun hazarded their lives unto death, And of Naphtali, in the heights of the field;

19. The kings came, they fought; The kings of Canaan fought in Taanah, Near the waters of Megiddo; But they gained no lucre (thereby.)

20. The stars of heaven fought in their courses; They fought against Sisera.

21. The torrents of Kison swept them away; The torrent of Kedummim, The torrent of Kison. O my soul, Thou hast trodden down strength!

22. Then were the horsehoofs broken by the gallopings, The gallopings of their great men

23. Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of THE LORD; Bitterly curse her inhabitants, Because they came not to the aid of THE LORD; To the aid of THE LORD among the mighty.

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

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

26. She put her hand to the nail, And her right hand to the workman's hammer; And she smote Sisera: She pierced his head, she penetrated, And she perforated his temples.

27. Between her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay Between her feet; he bowed, he fell; Where he bowed, there he fell down slain.

28. The mother of Sisera looked through the window, And exclaimed through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why linger the steps of his steeds?'

29. Her wise ladies answered their mistress Yea, she returned answer to herself:

30. 'Have they not found, Have they not divided the spoil? To each a damsel or two apiece, To Sisera himself a spoil of divers colors, A spoil of divers colors embroidered; Of divers colors embroidered on both sides. A spoil for (adorning) his neck.'

31. So perish all thine enemies, O LORD! But let thy friends (rejoice,) As the sun going forth in his strength.

Other attempts have been made to do justice to this very sublime song, and much yet remains to be done. The best means of ascertaining the sense and import of the various images and allusions contained in it is, in my opinion, the following: 1. Take the Hebrew text as it stands printed in the hemistich form in Kennicott's Hebrew Bible. 2. Collate this text with the Septuagint, Chaldee, Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic versions, and the various readings in Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi. 3. Consult the writers in the *Critica Sacra*. And, 4. Carefully attend to the allusions made to Asiatic customs. I would gladly save my readers all this trouble, but it would extend the commentary beyond the size of the whole book, which would not comport with the brevity which I study. From this song, as well as from that of Moses, Deuteronomy 32:1-43, we see that the first, as also the best, poets of antiquity were found among the Hebrews; and that the art of poetry was highly cultivated among them many hundreds of years before Greece, or any other country of the world, could boast of ode, or

epic, or any kind of poetic composition. The idolizers of Greece and Italy should not forget this: to Hebrew models both Greeks and Romans owe much of their perfection. Why are not these more studied? Why do not we go to the “fountain head?” To all the searchers after the venerable remains of antiquity, especially to poets, I would address the words of the old prophet: —

*Dardanidae duri, puae vos a stirpe parentum  
Prima tulit tellus, eadem vos ubere laeto  
Accipiet reduces: ANTIQUAM EXQUIRITE MATREM.*

*VIRG. AEn., iii., ver. 94.*

*Ye valiant sons of Troy, the land that bore  
Your mighty ancestors to light before,  
Once more their great descendants shall embrace.  
Go, seek the ANCIENT MOTHER OF YOUR RACE.*

— *Pitt.*



## CHAPTER 6

*The Israelites again do evil, and are delivered into the hands of the Midianites, by whom they are oppressed seven years, 1, 2. Different tribes spoil their harvests, and take away their cattle, 3-5. They cry unto the Lord, and he sends them a prophet to reprehend and instruct them, 6-10. An angel appears unto Gideon, and gives him commission to deliver Israel, and works several miracles, to prove that he is Divinely appointed to this work, 11-23. Gideon builds an altar to the Lord, under the name of Jehovah-shalom; and throws down the altar of Baal, 24-27. His townsmen conspire against him; he expostulates with them, and they are pacified, 28-32. The Midianites and Amalekites gather together against Israel; Gideon summons Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, who join his standard, 33-35. The miracle of the fleece of wool, 36-40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1. *Delivered them unto the hand of Midian*** The Midianites were among the most ancient and inveterate of the enemies of Israel. They joined with the Moabites to seduce them to idolatry, and were nearly extirpated by them; Numbers 31:1-12. The Midianites dwelt on the eastern borders of the Dead Sea, and their capital was Arnon.

**Verse 2. *Made them the dens which are in the mountains*** Nothing can give a more distressing description of the state of the Israelites than what is here related. They durst not reside in the plain country, but were obliged to betake themselves to dens and caves of the mountains, and live like wild beasts, and were hunted like them by their adversaries.

**Verse 3. *Children of the East*** Probably those who inhabited Arabia Deserta, Ishmaelites.

**Verse 4. *Encamped against them*** Wandering hordes of Midianites, Amalekites, and Ishmaelites came, in the times of harvest and autumn, and carried away their crops, their fruit, and their cattle. And they appear to have come early, encamped in the plains, and watched the crops till they

were ready to be carried off. This is frequently the case even to the present day.

***Till thou come unto Gaza*** That is, the whole breadth of the land, from Jordan to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Thus the whole land was ravaged, and the inhabitants deprived of the necessaries of life.

**Verse 5. *They came up with their cattle and their tents*** All this proves that they were different tribes of wanderers who had no fixed residence; but, like their descendants the Bedouins or wandering Arabs, removed from place to place to get prey for themselves and forage for their cattle.

**Verse 8. *The Lord sent a prophet*** The Jews say that this was Phinehas; but it is more likely that it was some prophet or teacher raised up by the Lord to warn and instruct them. Such were his witnesses, and they were raised up from time to time to declare the counsel of God to his rebellious people.

**Verse 11. *There came an angel of the Lord*** The prophet came to teach and exhort, the angel comes to confirm the word of the prophet, to call and commission him who was intended to be their deliverer, and to work miracles, in order to inspire him with supernatural courage and a confidence of success.

***Ophrah*** Or Ephra, was a city, or village rather, in the half tribe of Manasseh, beyond Jordan.

***His son Gideon threshed wheat*** This is not the only instance in which a man taken from agricultural employments was made general of an army, and the deliverer of his country. Shamgar was evidently a ploughman, and with his ox-goad he slew many Philistines, and became one of the deliverers of Israel. Cincinnatus was taken from the plough, and was made dictator and commander-in-chief of the Roman armies. There is a great similarity between his case and that of Gideon.

***Threshed wheat by the winepress*** This was a place of privacy; he could not make a threshing-floor in open day as the custom was, and bring either the wheel over the grain, or tread it out with the feet of the oxen, for fear of the Midianites, who were accustomed to come and take it away as soon as threshed. He got a few sheaves from the field, and brought them home to

have them privately threshed for the support of the family. As there could be no vintage among the Israelites in their present distressed circumstances, the winepress would never be suspected by the Midianites to be the place of threshing corn.

**Verse 12. *The Lord is with thee*** “The WORD of the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.” -Targum. It appears that Gideon had proved himself, on former occasions, to be a man of courage and personal prowess; and this would naturally excite the confidence of his countrymen. God chooses for his work those instruments which, in the course of his operations in nature and providence, he has qualified for his purpose. The instruments thus chosen are generally unlikely, but they will be ever found the best qualified for the Divine employment.

**Verse 13. *And Gideon said unto him*** This speech is remarkable for its energy and simplicity; it shows indeed a measure of despondency, but not more than the circumstances of the case justified.

**Verse 14. *Go in this thy might*** What does the angel mean? He had just stated that Jehovah was with him; and he now says, Go in THIS thy might, i.e., in the might of Jehovah, who is with thee.

**Verse 15. *Wherewith shall I save Israel?*** I have neither men nor money.

***Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh*** הנה אלפי הדל, Behold, my thousand is impoverished. Tribes were anciently divided into tens, and fifties, and hundreds, and thousands; the thousands therefore marked grand divisions, and consequently numerous families; Gideon here intimates that the families of which he made a part were very much diminished. But if we take אלפי alpey for the contracted form of the plural, which is frequently in Hebrew nouns joined with a verb in the singular, then the translation will be, “The thousands in Manasseh are thinned;” i.e., this tribe is greatly reduced, and can do little against their enemies.

**Verse 16. *Thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*** Thou shalt as surely conquer all their host as if thou hadst but one man to contend with; or, Thou shalt destroy them to a man.

**Verse 17. *Show me a sign*** Work a miracle, that I may know that thou hast wisdom and power sufficient to authorize and qualify me for the work.

**Verse 18. *And bring forth my present*** My minchah; generally an offering of bread, wine, oil, flour, and such like. It seems from this that Gideon supposed the person to whom he spoke to be a Divine person. Nevertheless, what he prepared and brought out appears to be intended simply as an entertainment to refresh a respectable stranger.

**Verse 19. *Made ready a kid-the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot*** The manner in which the Arabs entertain strangers will cast light on this verse. Dr. Shaw observes: “Besides a bowl of milk, and a basket of figs, raisins, or dates, which upon our arrival were presented to us to stay our appetite, the master of the tent fetched us from his flock according to the number of our company, a kid or a goat, a lamb or a sheep; half of which was immediately seethed by his wife, and served up with cucasoe; the rest was made kab-ab, i.e., cut to pieces and roasted, which we reserved for our breakfast or dinner next day.” May we not suppose, says Mr. Harmer, that Gideon, presenting some slight refreshment to the supposed prophet, according to the present Arab mode, desired him to stay till he could provide something more substantial; that he immediately killed a kid, seethed part of it, and, when ready, brought out the stewed meat in a pot, with unleavened cakes of bread which he had baked; and the other part, the kab-ab, in a basket, for him to carry with him for some after-repast in his journey. See Shaw’s and Pococke’s Travels, and Harmer’s Observations.

***Brought it out unto him under the oak*** Probably where he had a tent, which, with the shade of the oak, sheltered them from the heat of the sun, and yet afforded the privilege of the refreshing breeze. Under a shade in the open air the Arabs, to the present day, are accustomed to receive their guests.

**Verse 20. *Take the flesh, etc.*** The angel intended to make the flesh and bread an offering to God, and the broth a libation.

**Verse 21. *The angel-put forth the end of the staff*** He appeared like a traveler with a staff in his hand; this he put forth, and having touched the

flesh, fire rose out of the rock and consumed it. Here was the most evident proof of supernatural agency.

**Then the angel-departed out of his sight.** Though the angel vanished out of his sight, yet God continued to converse with him either by secret inspiration in his own heart, or by an audible voice.

**Verse 22. Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen** This is an elliptical sentence, a natural expression of the distressed state of Gideon's mind: as if he had said, Have mercy on me, O Lord God! else I shall die; because I have seen an angel of Jehovah face to face. We have frequently seen that it was a prevalent sentiment, as well before as under the law, that if any man saw God, or his representative angel he must surely die. On this account Gideon is alarmed, and prays for his life. This notion prevailed among the heathens, and we find an instance of it in the fable of Jupiter and Semele. She wished to see his glory; she saw it, and was struck dead by the effulgence. See the notes on Exodus 33:20. We find that a similar opinion prevailed very anciently among the Greeks. In the hymn of Callimachus, εἰς λουτρα της παλλαδος, ver. 100, are these words: —

κρονιοι δ' ωδε λεγοντι νομοι  
'ος κε τιν' αθανατων, οκα μη θεος αυτος εληται,  
αθηρηση, μισθω τουτον ιδειν μεγαλω.

*“The laws of Saturn enact, that if any man see any of the immortal gods, unless that god himself shall choose it, he shall pay dearly for that sight.”*

**Verse 23. Fear not: thou shalt not die.** Here the discovery is made by God himself: Gideon is not curiously prying into forbidden mysteries, therefore he shall not die.

**Verse 24. Gideon built an altar-and called it Jehovah-shalom** The words יהוה שלום Yehovah shalom signify The Lord is my peace, or The peace of Jehovah; and this name he gave the altar, in reference to what God had said, Judges 6:23, Peace be unto thee, לך שלום shalom lecha, “Peace to thee;” which implied, not only a wish, but a prediction of the prosperous issue of the enterprise in which he was about to engage. It is

likely that this is the altar which is mentioned in Judges 6:26, and is spoken of here merely by anticipation.

**Verse 25. *Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock***

There is some difficulty in this verse, for, according to the Hebrew text, two bullocks are mentioned here; but there is only one mentioned in Judges 6:26, 28. But what was this second bullock? Some think that it was a bullock that was fattened in order to be offered in sacrifice to Baal. This is very probable, as the second bullock is so particularly distinguished from another which belonged to Gideon's father. As the altar was built upon the ground of Joash, yet appears to have been public property, (see Judges 6:29, 30,) so this second ox was probably reared and fattened at the expense of the men of that village, else why should they so particularly resent its being offered to Jehovah?

**Verse 26. *With the wood of the grove*** It is probable that אֲשֶׁרָה Asherah here signifies Astarte; and that there was a wooden image of this goddess on the altar of Baal. Baal-peor was the same as Priapus, Astarte as Venus; these two impure idols were proper enough for the same altar. In early times, and among rude people, the images of the gods were made of wood. This is the case still with the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, with the Indians of America, and with the inhabitants of Ceylon: many of the images of Budhoo are of wood. The Scandinavians also had wooden gods.

**Verse 27. *He feared his father's household*** So it appears that his father was an idolater: but as Gideon had ten men of his own servants whom he could trust in this matter, it is probable that he had preserved the true faith, and had not bowed his knee to the image of Baal.

**Verse 28. *The second bullock was offered*** It appears that the second bullock was offered because it was just seven years old, Judges 6:25, being calved about the time that the Midianitish oppression began; and it was now to be slain to indicate that their slavery should end with its life. The young bullock, Judges 6:25, is supposed to have been offered for a peace-offering; the bullock of seven years old, for a burnt-offering.

**Verse 29. *Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing***. They fixed on him the more readily because they knew he had not joined with them in their idolatrous worship.

**Verse 30. *The men of the city said*** They all felt an interest in the continuance of rites in which they had often many sensual gratifications. Baal and Ashtaroth would have more worshippers than the true God, because their rites were more adapted to the fallen nature of man.

**Verse 31. *Will ye plead for Baal?*** The words are very emphatic “Will ye plead in earnest תריבו for Baal? Will ye תושיעו really save him? If he be God, אלהים Elohim, let him contend for himself, seeing his altar is thrown down.” The paragogic letters in the words plead and save greatly increase the sense. Joash could not slay his son; but he was satisfied he had insulted Baal: if Baal were the true God, he would avenge his own injured honor. This was a sentiment among the heathens. Thus Tacitus, lib. i., c. 73, A.U.C. 768, mentioning the letter of Tiberius to the consuls in behalf of Cassius and Rubrius, two Roman knights, one of whom was accused of having sold a statue of Augustus in the auction of his gardens; and the other, of having sworn falsely by the name of Augustus, who had been deified by the senate; among other things makes him say: Non ideo decretum patri suo coelum, ut in perniciem civium is honor verteretur. Nec contra religiones fieri quod effigies ejus, utalia nu minum simulachra, venditionibus hortorum et domuum accedant. Jusjurandum perinde aestimandum quam si Jovem fefellisset: deorum injuriae diis curae—“That Divine honors were not decreed to his father (Augustus) to lay snares for the citizens; and if his statue, in common with the images of the gods in general, was put up to sale with the houses and gardens, it could not be considered an injury to religion. That any false oath must be considered as an attempt to deceive Jupiter himself; but the gods themselves must take cognizance of the injuries done unto them.” Livy has a similar sentiment, Hist. lib. x., c. 6, where, speaking of some attempts made to increase the number of the augurs out of the commons, with which the senators were displeased, he says: Simulabant ad deos id magis, quam ad se pertinere; ipsos visuros, ne sacra sua polluantur. — “They pretended that these things belonged more to the gods than themselves; and that they would take care that their sacred rites were not polluted.”

**Verse 32. *He called him Jerubbaal*** That is, Let Baal contend; changed, 2 Samuel 11:21, into Jerubbesheth, he shall contend against confusion or shame; thus changing baal, lord, into bosheth, confusion or ignominy. Some think that Jerubbaal was the same with Jerombalus, who, according to

Sanchoniatho and Porphyry, was a priest of Jevo. But the history of Sanchoniatho is probably a forgery of Porphyry himself, and worthy of no credit.

**Verse 33. *Then all the Midianites*** Hearing of what Gideon had done, and apprehending that this might be a forerunner of attempts to regain their liberty, they formed a general association against Israel.

**Verse 34. *The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon*** He was endued with preternatural courage and wisdom.

**Verse 36. *If thou wilt save Israel*** Gideon was very bold, and God was very condescending. But probably the request itself was suggested by the Divine Spirit. ON the miracle of the fleece, dew, and dry ground, Origen, in his eighth homily on the book of Judges, has many curious and interesting thoughts, I shall insert the substance of the whole: — The fleece is the Jewish nation. The fleece covered with dew, while all around is dry, the Jewish nation favored with the law and the prophets. The fleece dry, the Jewish nation cast off for rejecting the Gospel. All around watered, the Gospel preached to the Gentiles. and they converted to God. The fleece on the threshing-floor, the Jewish people in the land of Judea, winnowed, purged, and fanned by the Gospel. The dew wrung out into the bowl, the doctrines of Christianity, extracted from the Jewish writings, shadowed forth by Christ's pouring water into a basin, and washing the disciples' feet. The pious father concludes that he has now wrung this water out of the fleece of the book of Judges, as he hopes by and by to do out of the fleece of the book of Kings, and out of the fleece of the book of Isaiah or Jeremiah; and he has received it into the basin of his heart, and there conceived its true sense; and is desirous to wash the feet of his brethren, that they may be able to walk in the way of the preparation of the Gospel of peace. — ORIGEN, Op. vol. ii., p. 475, edit. Benedict. All this to some will doubtless appear trifling; but it is not too much to say that scarcely any pious mind can consider the homily of this excellent man without drinking into a measure of the same spirit, so much sincerity, deep piety, and unction, appear throughout the whole: yet as I do not follow such practices, I cannot recommend them. Of dealers in such small wares, we have many that imitate Benjamin Keach, but few that come nigh to Origen.



## CHAPTER 7

*The Lord commands Gideon to make a selection of a small number of his men to go against the Midianites. Three hundred only are selected; and into the hands of these God promises to deliver the whole Midianitish host, 1-8. Gideon is directed to go down unto the host in the night, that he may be encouraged on hearing what they say, 9-12. He obeys, and hears a Midianite tell a remarkable dream unto his fellow, which predicted the success of his attack, 13-15. He takes encouragement, divides his men into three companies, and gives each a trumpet with a lighted lamp concealed in a pitcher, with directions how to use them, 16-18. They come to the Midianitish camp at night, when all suddenly blowing their trumpets and exposing their lamps, the Midianites are thrown into confusion, fly, and are stopped by the Ephraimites at the passage of Jordan, and slain, 19-24. Oreb and Zeeb, two Midianitish princes, are slain, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1. *Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon*** It appears that Jerubbaal was now a surname of Gideon, from the circumstance mentioned Judges 6:32. See Judges 8:35.

***The well of Harod*** If this was a town or village, it is nowhere else mentioned. Probably, as **𐤇𐤇𐤇** charad signifies to shake or tremble through fear, the fountain in question may have had its name from the terror and panic with which the Midianitish host was seized at this place.

**Verse 2. *The people that are with thee are too many*** Had he led up a numerous host against his enemies, the excellence of the power by which they were discomfited might have appeared to be of man and not of God. By the manner in which this whole transaction was conducted, both the Israelites and Midianites must see that the thing was of God. This would inspire the Israelites with confidence, and the Midianites with fear.

**Verse 3. *Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return-from Mount Gilead*** Gideon was certainly not at Mount Gilead at this time, but rather near Mount Gilboa. Gilead was on the other side of Jordan. Calmet thinks there must either have been two Gileads, which does not from the Scripture appear to be the case, or that the Hebrew text is here corrupted, and that for Gilead we should read Gilboa. This reading, though adopted by Houbigant, is not countenanced by any MS., nor by any of the versions. Dr. Hales endeavors to reconcile the whole, by the supposition that there were in Gideon's army many of the eastern Manassites, who came from Mount Gilead; and that these probably were more afraid of their neighbors, the Midianites, than the western tribes were; and therefore proposes to read the text thus: Whosoever from Mount Gilead is fearful and afraid, let him return (home) and depart early. So there returned (home) twenty-two thousand of the people.

*Perhaps this is on the whole the best method of solving this difficulty. There returned of the people twenty and two thousand* Gideon's army was at this time thirty-two thousand strong, and after the above address twenty-two thousand went away. How astonishing, that in thirty-two thousand men there should be found not less than twenty-two thousand poltroons, who would neither fight for God nor their oppressed country! A state of slavery debases the mind of man, and renders it incapable of being influenced by the pure principles of patriotism or religion. In behalf of the army of Gideon we may say, if the best appointed armies in Europe had the same address, bona fide, from their generals as the Israelites had, at least an equal proportion would return home.

**Verse 5. *Every one that lappeth of the water-as a dog*** The original word לֹק yalok is precisely the sound which a dog makes when he is drinking.

**Verse 6. *The number of them that lapped*** From this account it appears that some of the people went down on their knees, and putting their mouths to the water, sucked up what they needed; the others stooped down, and taking up water in the hollow of their hands, applied it to their mouth.

**Verse 8. *So the people took victuals*** The three hundred men that he reserved took the victuals necessary for the day's expenditure, while the

others were dismissed to their tents and their houses as they thought proper.

**Verse 9. *I have delivered it into thine hand.*** I have determined to do it, and it is as sure as if it were done.

**Verse 11. *Unto the outside of the armed men*** No doubt the vast multitudes of Midianites, etc., which came merely for plunder, were wholly unarmed; but they had a guard of armed men, as all the caravans have, and those guards were on the outside of the multitudes; it was to these that Gideon and his servant came.

**Verse 13. *Told a dream*** Both the dream and the interpretation were inspired by God for the purpose of increasing the confidence of Gideon, and appalling his enemies.

**Verse 14. *Into his hand hath God delivered Midian*** This is a full proof that God had inspired both the dream and its interpretation.

**Verse 16. *He divided the three hundred men*** Though the victory was to be from the Lord, yet he knew that he ought to use prudential means; and those which he employed on this occasion were the best calculated to answer the end. If he had not used these means, it is not likely that God would have delivered the Midianites into his hands. Sometimes, even in working a miracle, God will have natural means used: Go, dip thyself seven times in Jordan. Go, wash in the pool Siloam.

**Verse 18. *The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.*** The word **חֶרֶב** chereb, “sword,” is not found in this verse, though it is necessarily implied, and is found in Judges 7:20. But it is found in this place in the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, and in eight of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS. The reading appears to be genuine.

**Verse 20. *Blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers*** How astonishing must the effect be, in a dark night, of the sudden glare of three hundred torches, darting their splendor, in the same instant, on the half-awakened eyes of the terrified Midianites, accompanied with the clangour of three hundred trumpets, alternately mingled with the thundering shout of **חֶרֶב לַיהוָה וּלְגִדּוֹן** chereb layhovah ulegidon, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” Origen, in his ninth homily on this book, makes these three

hundred men types of the preachers of the Gospel; their trumpets of the preaching of Christ crucified; and their lights or torches, of the holy conduct of righteous men. In some verses of an ancient author, attributed to Tertullian, and written against the heretic Marcion, Gideon's three hundred men are represented as horsemen; and in this number he finds the mystery of the cross; because the Greek letter T, tau which is the numeral for 300, is itself the sign of the cross. The verses, which may be found in vol. v. of the Pisaurian Collection of the Latin heathen and Christian poets, Advers. Marcion., lib. 3, ver. 18, as being very curious, and not often to be met with, I shall here subjoin: —

*Exodus quibus ut Gideon dux agminis, acer in hostem,  
Non virtute sua tutelam acquirere genti  
Firmatusque fide signum petit excita menti,  
Quo vel non posset, vel posset vincere bellum,  
Vellus ut in noctem positum de rore maderet,  
Et tellus omnis circum siccata jaceret,  
Hoc inimicorum palmam coalescere mundo;  
Atque iterum solo remanenti vellere sicco,  
Hoc eadem tellus roraret nocte liquore,  
Hoc etenim signo praedonum stravit acervos.  
Congressus populo Christi, sine milite multo:  
Tercenteno equite (numerus Tau littera Graeca)  
Armatis facibusque et cornibus ore canentum.  
Vellus erat populus ovium de semine sancto.  
Nam tellus variae gentes fusaeque per orbem,  
Verbum quod nutrit, sed nox est mortis imago.  
Tau signum crucis et cornu praeconia vitae,  
Lucentesque faces in lychno spiritus ardens.*

*“Gideon, keen in arms, was captain of the host,  
And acquired redemption for his people, but not by his own power.  
Being strengthened in faith, his heart was influenced to ask a sign  
By which he might know whether or not he should be successful in  
battle.*

*A fleece was so placed by night, that it might be wet with dew;  
And all the surrounding earth remain dry.  
By this he was to learn that he should gain the victory over his enemies.  
The sign was reversed; the fleece remaining dry while all the ground was moist;*

*And by this sign he was to know that he should slaughter those troops of robbers.  
The people of Christ conquer without any military force;  
Three hundred horsemen, (for the Greek letter T, tau, is the emblem of the number,)*

*Armed with torches, and blowing with trumpets.  
The fleece of the sheep are the people sprung from the Messiah,  
And the earth are the various nations dispersed over the world.  
It is the word which nourishes; but might is the image of death.*

*Tau is the sign of the cross; and the trumpets, the emblems of the heralds of life;  
And the burning torches in the pitchers, the emblems of the Holy Spirit.”*

We see here what abstruse meanings a strong imagination, assisted by a little piety, may extract from what was never intended to be understood as a mystery.

**Verse 21. *They stood every man in his place*** Each of the three companies kept its station, and continued to sound their trumpets. The Midianites seeing this, and believing that they were the trumpets of a numerous army which had then penetrated their camp, were thrown instantly into confusion; and supposing that their enemies were in the midst of them, they turned their swords against every man they met, while at the same time they endeavored to escape for their lives. No stratagem was ever better imagined, better executed, or more completely successful.

**Verse 22. *Fled to Beth-shittah*** This is no where else mentioned in Scripture.

**Zererath** This and Tabbath are nowhere else to be found.

**Abel-meholah** This was the birth-place of the prophet Elisha, 1 Kings 19:16. It was beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh, 1 Kings 4:12. The Zartanah, mentioned in this last quoted verse, was probably the same as Zererath. Its situation corresponds well with Abel-meholah.

**Verse 23. *The men of Israel gathered*** It is very likely that these were some persons whom Gideon had sent home the day before, who now hearing that the Midianites were routed, went immediately in pursuit.

**Verse 24. *Take before them the waters unto Beth-barah*** This is probably the same place as that mentioned John 1:28, where the Hebrews forded Jordan under the direction of Joshua. To this place the Midianites directed their flight that they might escape into their own country; and here, being met by the Ephraimites, they appear to have been totally overthrown, and their two generals taken.

**Verse 25. *They slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb*** These two generals had taken shelter, one in the cavern of the rock, the other in the vat of a winepress; both of which places were from this circumstance, afterwards called by their names.

***Brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon*** OREB signifies a raven and ZEEB a wolf. In all ancient nations we find generals and princes taking their names from both birds and beasts; the Romans had their Gracchi, jackdaws; Corvini, crows; Aquilini, eagles, etc. We have the same in our Crows, Wolfs, Lyons, Hawkes, Bulls, Kidds, etc. Among barbarous nations the head of the conquered chief was often brought to the conqueror. Pompey's head was brought to Caesar; Cicero's head, to Mark Antony; the heads of Ahab's children, to Jehu, etc. These barbarities are not often practiced now, except among the Mohammedans or the savages of Africa and America; and for the credit of human nature it is a pity that such barbarous atrocities had ever been committed.

## CHAPTER 8

*The Ephraimites are angry with Gideon because he did not call them particularly to his assistance; he pacifies them, 1-3. Gideon and his three hundred men pass over Jordan, pursuing the Midianites; and, being faint, ask victuals from the princes of Succoth, but are refused, 4-7. They make the like application to the people of Penuel, and are also refused, 8, 9. Gideon defeats Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, and takes them prisoners, 10-12. He chastises the men of Succoth and Penuel, 13-17. He slays Zebah and Zalumunna, who had killed his brethren, 18-21. The Israelites offer him the kingdom, which he refuses, 22, 23. He requires from them the gold rings which they had taken from the Ishmaelites, and makes an ephod, which he sets up at Ophrah; and it became an instrument of idolatry, 24-27. The land enjoys peace forty years; Gideon dies, having seventy-one sons, 28-32. The Israelites fall into idolatry, and forget their obligations to Gideon's family, 33-35.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. *The men of Ephraim said*** This account is no doubt displaced; for what is mentioned here could not have taken place till the return of Gideon from the pursuit of the Midianites; for he had not yet passed Jordan, Judges 8:4. And it was when he was beyond that river that the Ephraimites brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to him, Judges 7:25.

**Verse 2. *Is not the gleanings, etc.*** That is, The Ephraimites have performed more important services than Gideon and his men; and he supports the assertion by observing that it was they who took the two Midianitish generals, having discomfited their hosts at the passes of Jordan.

**Verse 3. *Then their anger was abated*** A soft answer turneth away wrath. He might have said that he could place but little dependence on his brethren when, through faint-heartedness, 22, 000 left him at one time; but he passed this by, and took a more excellent way.

**Verse 4. *Faint, yet pursuing*** The Vulgate paraphrases this, et prae lassitudine, fugientes persequi non poterant; “and, through fatigue, unable to pursue the fugitives.”

**Verse 5. *Give, I pray you, loaves of bread*** As Gideon was engaged in the common cause of Israel, he had a right to expect succor from the people at large. His request to the men of Succoth and Penuel was both just and reasonable.

**Verse 6. *Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand*** They feared to help Gideon, lest, if he should be overpowered, the Midianites would revenge it upon them; and they dared not trust God.

**Verse 7. *I will tear your flesh*** What this punishment consisted in I cannot say; it must mean a severe punishment: as if he had said, I will thresh your flesh with briers and thorns, as corn is threshed out with threshing instruments; or, Ye shall be trodden down under the feet of my victorious army, as the corn is trodden out with the feet of the ox. Succoth was beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad. Penuel was also in the same tribe, and not far distant from Succoth.

**Verse 9. *I will break down this tower.*** Probably they had not only denied him, but insultingly pointed to a tower in which their chief defense lay; and intimated to him that he might do his worst, for they could amply defend themselves.

**Verse 10. *Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor*** If this were a place, it is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture. Some contend that קרקר karkor signifies rest; and thus the Vulgate understood it: Zebah and Zalmunna requiescebant, rested, with all their army. And this seems the most likely, for it is said, Judges 8:11, that Gideon smote the host, for the host was secure.

**Verse 13. *Returned from battle before the sun was up*** This does not appear to be a proper translation of מלמעלה החרם milmaaleh hechares. It should be rendered from the ascent of Chares: this is the reading of the Septuagint, the Syriac, and the Arabic.

**Verse 14. *He described unto him the princes of Succoth*** The young man probably gave him the names of seventy persons, the chief men of



Succoth, who were those who were most concerned in refusing him and his men the refreshment he requested.

**Verse 16. *He taught the men of Succoth.*** Instead of וידע he taught, Houbigant reads וידש he tore; and this is not only agreeable to what Gideon had threatened, Judges 8:7, but is supported by the Vulgate, Septuagint, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic. The Hebrew text might have been easily corrupted in this place by the change of ש shin into ש ain, letters very similar to each other.

**Verse 18. *What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?*** We have no antecedent to this question; and are obliged to conjecture one: it seems as if Zebah and Zalmunna had massacred the family of Gideon, while he was absent on this expedition. Gideon had heard some confused account of it, and now questions them concerning the fact. They boldly acknowledge it, and describe the persons whom they slew, by which he found they were his own brethren. This determines him to avenge their death by slaying the Midianitish kings, whom he otherwise was inclined to save. He might have heard that his brethren had been taken prisoners, and might have hoped to have exchanged them for the kings now in his hand; but when he found they had been all slain, he decrees the death of their murderers. There is something in this account similar to that in the 12th Aeneis of Virgil:—When Turnus was overthrown, and supplicated for his life, and Aeneas was inclined to spare him; he saw the belt of his friend Pallas, whom Turnus had slain, and which he now wore as a trophy: this immediately determined the Trojan to sacrifice the life of Turnus to the manes of his friend. The story is well told: —

*Stetit acer in armis*

*Aeneas, volvens oculos, dextramque repressit.*

*Et jam jamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo*

*Cooperat: infelix humero cum apparuit ingens*

*Balteus, et notis fulserunt cingula bullis*

*Pallantis pueri; victum quem vulnere Turnus*

*Straverat, atque humeris inimicum insigne gerebat.*

*Ille oculis postquam saevi monumenta doloris*

*Exuviisque hausit: furiis accensus et ira*

*Terribilis: Tunc hinc spoliis indute meorum*

*Eripiare mihi?. — Pallas, te hoc vulnere Pallas  
Immolat; et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.  
Hoc dicens furrum adverso sub pectore condit Fervidus.*

VIRG. *AE*n. lib. xii., ver. 938.

*“In deep suspense the Trojan seem’d to stand,  
And, just prepared to strike, repress’d his hand.  
He roll’d his eyes, and every moment felt  
His manly soul with more compassion melt.*

*When, casting down a casual glance, he spied  
The golden belt that glitter’d on his side;  
The fatal spoils which haughty Turnus tore  
From dying Pallas, and in triumph wore.*

*Then roused anew to wrath, he loudly cries,  
(Flames, while he spoke, came flashing from his eyes,)  
Traitor! dost thou! dost thou to grace pretend,  
Clad, as thou art, in trophies of my friend? —*

*To his sad soul a grateful offering go;  
‘Tis Pallas, Pallas gives this deadly blow.  
He rais’d his arm aloft; and at the word,  
Deep in his bosom drove the shining sword.”*

DRYDEN.

The same principle impels Gideon to slay Zebah and Zalmunna which induced AENEAS to kill Turnus: and perhaps the ornaments which he took from their camels’ necks, Judges 8:21, were some of the spoils of his slaughtered brethren.

**Verse 20.** *He said unto Jether his first-born* By the ancient laws of war, prisoners taken in war might be either slain, sold, or kept for slaves. To put a captive enemy to death no executioner was required. Gideon slays Zebah and Zalmunna with his own hand. So Samuel is said to have hewn

Agag in pieces, 1 Samuel 15:33. Benaiah slew Joab, 1 Kings 2:25. Saul orders his guards to slay the priests who had contributed to the escape of David, 1 Samuel 22:17; and David caused one of his attendants to slay the Amalekite who pretended to have slain Saul, 2 Samuel 1:15.

**Verse 21. *Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise, thou, and fall upon us*** It was disgraceful to fall by the hands of a child; and the death occasioned by the blows of such a person must be much more lingering and tormenting. Some have even employed children to despatch captives. Civilis, a Roman knight, headed a revolt of the Gauls against Rome, in the year of the city 824. Of him Tacitus says, Hist. lib. iv., c. 61: *Ferebatur parvulo filio quosdam captivorum sagittis jaculisque puerilibus figendos obtulisse*: “He is said to have given to his little son some prisoners, as butts to be shot at with little darts and arrows.” This was for their greater torment and dishonor; and to inure his child to blood! Could any thing like this have been the design of Gideon?

***The ornaments that were on their camels’ necks.*** The heads, necks, bodies, and legs of camels, horses, and elephants, are highly ornamented in the eastern countries, and indeed this was common, from the remotest antiquity, in all countries. Virgil refers to it as a thing long before his time, and thus describes the horses given by King Latinus to the ambassadors of Aeneas. — AEn. lib. vii., ver. 274.

*Haec effatus equos numero pater eligit omni.  
Stabant tercentum nitidi in praesepebus altis:  
Omnibus extemplo Teucris jubet ordine duci  
Instratos ostro alipedes pictisque tapetis. Aurea  
pectoribus demissa monilia pendent: Tecti auro  
fulvum mandunt sub dentibus aurum.*

*“He said, and order’d steeds to mount the band: In  
lofty stalls three hundred coursers stand; Their  
shining sides with crimson cover’d o’er; The  
sprightly steeds embroider’d trappings wore, With  
golden chains, refulgent to behold: Gold were their  
bridles, and they champ’d on gold.”*

PITT.

Instead of ornaments, the Septuagint translate **τους μηνισκους**, the crescents or half-moons; and this is followed by the Syriac and Arabic. The worship of the moon was very ancient; and, with that of the sun, constituted the earliest idolatry of mankind. We learn from Judges 8:24 that the Ishmaelites, or Arabs, as they are termed by the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic, had golden ear-rings, and probably a crescent in each; for it is well known that the Ishmaelites, and the Arabs who descended from them, were addicted very early to the worship of the moon; and so attached were they to this superstition, that although Mohammed destroyed the idolatrous use of the crescent, yet it was universally borne in their ensigns, and on the tops of their mosques, as well as in various ornaments.

**Verse 22. *Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son***

That is, Become our king, and let the crown be hereditary in thy family. What a weak, foolish, and inconstant people were these! As yet their government was a theocracy; and now, dazzled with the success of a man who was only an instrument in the hands of God to deliver them from their enemies, they wish to throw off the Divine yoke, and shackle themselves with an unlimited hereditary monarchy! An unlimited

of worship at Ophrah; and he took this occasion to provide the proper sacerdotal vestments.

**Verse 26. *The weight of the golden ear-rings-was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold*** Taking the shekel at half an ounce weight, the sum of the gold collected in ear-rings was seventy pounds ten ounces; and worth, as gold now rates, about  $\text{œ}3$ , 100 sterling. This computation of the weight of the golden ear-rings, taken from the slaughtered Ishmaelites, will bring to the reader's mind the slaughter of the Roman knights by the Carthaginians at the battle of Cannae, from whose spoils Hannibal sent three bushels of gold rings to the city of Carthage!

**Verse 27. *Gideon made an ephod thereof*** That is, he made an ephod out of this mass of gold; but he could not employ it all in making this one garment, for it is not likely that any man could wear a coat of nearly one hundred pounds weight. It is likely that he made a whole tabernacle service in miniature out of this gold.

***All Israel went thither a whoring after it*** This form of speech often occurs, and has been often explained. The whole Jewish nation is represented as being united to God as a wife is to her husband. Any act of idolatry is considered as a breach of their covenant with God, as an act of whoredom is the breach of the marriage agreement between man and wife. God calls himself the husband of the Jewish nation, and their idolatries acts of whoredom, adultery, and fornication. All Israel paid idolatrous worship to the ephod or sacerdotal establishment made by Gideon at Ophrah, and this is called going a whoring after it; see on Judges 8:33. For a description of the ephod, see Exodus 25:7; and for the other garments of the priests, see Exodus 28:4, etc.

**Verse 28. *Forty years in the days of Gideon*** . The Midianites were so completely humbled that they could make head no more against Israel during the forty years in which the government of Gideon lasted.

**Verse 31. *His concubine*** A lawful but secondary wife, whose children could not inherit.

***Whose name he called Abimelech*** . That is, my father is king, or my father hath reigned. This name was doubtless given by the mother, and so it should be understood here; she wished to raise her son to the supreme

government, and therefore gave him a name which might serve to stimulate him to seek that which she hoped he should enjoy in his father's right. See the following chapter.

**Verse 32. *Gideon-died in a good old age*** Supposed to have been A.M. 2799; B.C. 1205.

**Verse 33. *A whoring after Baalim*** This term has probably a different meaning here from what it has Judges 8:7; for it is very likely that in most parts of the pagan worship there were many impure rites, so that going a whoring after Baalim may be taken in a literal sense.

***Baal-berith*** Literally, the lord of the covenant; the same as Jupiter faederis, or Mercury, among the Romans; the deity whose business it was to preside over compacts, leagues, treaties, covenants, etc. Some of the versions understand it as if the Israelites had made a covenant or agreement to have Baal for their god; so the VULGATE: Percusseruntque cum Baal faedus, ut esset eis in deum.

**Verse 34. *Remembered not the Lord their God*** They attributed their deliverance to some other cause, and did not give him the glory of their salvation.

**Verse 35. *Neither showed they kindness to the house of-Gideon*** They were both unthankful and unholy. Though they had the clearest proofs of God's power and goodness before their eyes, yet they forgot him. And although they were under the greatest obligations to Gideon, and were once so sensible of them that they offered to settle the kingdom on him and his family, yet they forgot him also; for, becoming foes to GOD, they could not be friends to MAN. Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon. — This is improper; it should be Jerubbaal Gideon, as we say Simon Peter, or call any man by his Christian name and surname. THE ancients, particularly St. Ambrose and Augustine, have endeavored to find out a parallel between our blessed Lord and Gideon. We have already seen what Origen has made of the whole account, who is followed in the main by the above Latin fathers. As I believe no such parallel was intended by the Spirit of God, I must be excused from going into their details. It is no credit either to Christ or Christianity to be compared to such persons and their transactions. 1. Of Gideon the most we can say is that which the angel said, he was a mighty

man of valor. 2. He was also a true patriot, he loved his country, and hazarded his life for it; and yet he would not stir till he had the most incontestable proofs that God would, by his supernatural assistance, make him victorious. 3. He was most evidently disinterested, and void of ambition; he refused the kingdom when it was offered to him and to his heirs after him. But, consistently with the belief he had in God, he could not accept it, as this would have been a complete alteration of the Jewish constitution, which acknowledged no ruler but God himself. 4. His motive in making the ephod is not well understood; probably it was done with no reprehensible design. But the act was totally wrong; he had no Divine authority to make such an innovation in the religious worship of his country. The ark was at Shechem; and there was the proper and only accredited priest. The act therefore can never be excused, whatever may be said of his motive. 5. His private character does not appear to have been very exemplary; he had many wives, and seventy sons by them, besides one by a concubine, which he kept at Shechem, where he was often obliged to go as judge, for the purpose of administering justice. In short, there is scarcely a trait in his character worthy to be compared with any thing in the conduct of the Redeemer of mankind. 6. Parallels to Christ, and the work of his Spirit in the salvation of men, have been diligently sought in the sacred writings, by both commentators and preachers; and we have had voluminous treatises on types and antitypes; and how little has sound doctrine or true piety derived from them! They have often served to unsettle the former, and have been rather inimical than favorable to the interests of the latter. When the Spirit of God says such things are types and such things are allegories, it is our duty to believe and examine; when men produce their types and metaphors, it may be our duty to doubt, be suspicious, and pass on.

## CHAPTER 9

*Abimelech is made king; and, to secure himself in the kingdom, slays his brethren; Jotham, the youngest only escapes, 14. Jotham reproves him and the Shechemites by a curious and instructive parable, 7-21.*

*Abimelech having reigned three years, the Shechemites, headed by Gaal the son of Ebed, conspire against him, 22-29. Zebul, governor of the city, apprises Abimelech of the insurrection, who comes with his forces, and discomfits Gaal, 30-40. Abimelech assaults the city, takes, beats it down, and sows it with salt, 41-45. Several of the Shechemites take refuge in the temple of Baal-berith; Abimelech sets fire to it, and destroys in it about one thousand men and women, 46-50. He afterwards besieges and takes Thebez; but while he is assaulting the citadel, a woman threw a piece of millstone upon his head, and killed him. Thus God requited him and the men of Shechem for their wickedness, and their ingratitude to the family of Gideon, 51-57.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. *Abimelech-went to Shechem*** We have already seen that Abimelech was the son of Gideon, by his concubine at Shechem. His going thither immediately after his father's death was to induce his townsmen to proclaim him governor in the place of his father. Shechem was the residence of his mother, and of all her relatives.

**Verse 2. *Whether is better for you, either that all the sons*** This was a powerful argument: Whether will you have seventy tyrants or only one! For, as he had no right to the government, and God alone was king at that time in Israel; so he must support his usurped rule by whatever means were most likely to effect it: a usurped government is generally supported by oppression and the sword.

**Verse 3. *He is our brother.*** We shall be raised to places of trust under him, and our city will be the capital of the kingdom.



**Verse 4. *Threescore and ten pieces of silver*** Probably shekels; and this was the whole of his exchequer. As he was now usurping the government of God, he begins with a contribution from the idol temple. A work begun under the name and influence of the devil is not likely to end to the glory of God, or to the welfare of man.

***Hired vain and light persons*** אנשים ריקים ופחזים anashim reykim uphochazim, worthless and dissolute men; persons who were living on the public, and had nothing to lose. Such was the foundation of his Babel government. By a cunning management of such rascals most revolutions have been brought about.

**Verse 5. *Slew his brethren*** His brothers by the father's side, Judges 8:30. This was a usual way of securing an ill-gotten throne; the person who had no right destroying all those that had right, that he might have no competitors

***Yet Jotham-was left*** That is, all the seventy were killed except Jotham, if there were not seventy besides Jotham. All the histories of all the nations of the earth are full of cruelties similar to those of Abimelech: cousins, uncles, brothers, husbands, and fathers have been murdered by their cousins, nephews, brothers, wives, and children, in order that they might have the undisturbed possession of an ill-gotten throne. Europe, Asia, and Africa, can witness all this. Even now, some of these horribly obtained governments exist.

**Verse 6. *And all the house of Millo*** If Millo be the name of a place, it is nowhere else mentioned in the sacred writings. But it is probably the name of a person of note and influence in the city of Shechem-the men of Shechem and the family of Millo.

**Verse 7. *Stood in the top of Mount Gerizim*** Gerizim and Ebal were mounts very near to each other; the former lying to the north, the latter to the south, and at the foot of them Shechem. But see some remarks on the extent of the human voice in some hilly countries in the following extract from a late traveler in the East: — “The great extent to which the sound of the voice is conveyed may be mentioned. Some persons have thought this a proof of the extreme rarity of the atmosphere. A similar observation is made by Captain Parry in his Voyage of Discovery to the Polar Regions in


1819-20, where he states that in the depth of winter the sound of the men's voices was heard at a much greater distance than usual. This phenomenon is constantly observed on the Neilgherries. I have heard the natives, especially in the morning and evening, when the air was still, carry on conversation from one hill to another, and that apparently without any extraordinary effort. They do not shout in the manner that strangers think necessary in order to be heard at so great a distance, but utter every syllable as distinctly as if they were conversing face to face. When listening to them, I have often been reminded of those passages in holy writ where it is recorded that Jotham addressed the ungrateful men of Shechem from Mount Gerizim, that David cried 'from the top of a hill afar off' to Abner and to the people that lay about their master Saul, and that Abner addressed Joab from the top of a hill." -Letters on the Climate, Inhabitants, Productions, etc., etc., of the Neilgherries, or Blue Mountains of Coimbatoor, South India, by James Hough, of Madras: 1829.

***That God may hearken unto you.*** It appears that Jotham received this message from God, and that he spoke on this occasion by Divine inspiration.

***Verse 8. The trees went forth on a time*** This is the oldest, and without exception the best fable or apologue in the world. See the observations at the end of this chapter. It is not to be supposed that a fable, if well formed, requires much illustration; every part of this, a few expressions excepted, illustrates itself, and tells its own meaning.

***To anoint a king*** Hence it appears that anointing was usual in the installation of kings, long before there was any king in Israel; for there is much evidence that the book of Judges was written before the days of Saul and David.

***The olive tree*** The olive was the most useful of all the trees in the field or forest, as the bramble was the meanest and the most worthless.

***Verse 9. Wherewith-they honor God and man*** I believe the word אלהים  elohim here should be translated gods, for the parable seems to be accommodated to the idolatrous state of the Shechemites. Thus it was understood by the Vulgate, Arabic, and others. It is true that olive oil was often used in the service of God: the priests were anointed with it; the

lamps in the tabernacle lighted with it; almost all the offerings of fine flour, cakes prepared in the pan, etc., had oil mingled with them; therefore Jotham might say that with it they honor God; and as priests, prophets, and kings were anointed, and their office was the most honorable, he might with propriety say, therewith they honor man. But I am persuaded he used the term in the first sense. See on Judges 9:13.

**Verse 11. *But the fig tree said-Should I forsake my sweetness*** The fruit of the fig tree is the sweetest or most luscious of all fruits. A full-ripe fig, in its own climate, has an indescribable sweetness; so much so that it is almost impossible to eat it, till a considerable time after it is gathered from the trees, and has gone through an artificial preparation. This I have often noticed.

**Verse 13. *Which cheereth God and man*** I believe אלהים *elohim* here is to be taken in the same sense proposed on Judges 9:9. Vast libations of wine, as well as much oil, were used in heathenish sacrifices and offerings; and it was their opinion that the gods actually partook of, and were delighted with, both the wine and oil. The pagan mythology furnishes the most exquisite wines to its gods in heaven, and hence the nectar and ambrosia so much talked of and praised by the ancients. It is not reasonable to suppose that Jotham makes any reference here to the sacrifices, oblations, and perfumes offered to the true God. This language the idolatrous Shechemites could scarcely understand. What could the worshippers of Baal-berith know of the worship of the God who gave his law to Moses? And it is not very likely that Jotham himself was well acquainted with the sacred rites of the Mosaic religion, as they had been little preached in his time.

**Verse 14. *Then said all the trees unto the bramble*** The word אתד *atad*, which we translate bramble, is supposed to mean the rhamnus, which is the largest of thorns, producing dreadful spikes, similar to darts. See Theodoret on Psalm 58:10. There is much of the moral of this fable contained in the different kinds of trees mentioned. 1. The olive; the most profitable tree to its owner, having few equals either for food or medicine. 2. The fig tree; one of the most fruitful of trees, and yielding one of the most delicious fruits, and superior to all others for sweetness. 3. The vine, which alone yields a liquor that, when properly prepared, and taken in

strict moderation, is friendly both to the body and mind of man, having a most direct tendency to invigorate both. 4. The bramble or thorn, which, however useful as a hedge, is dangerous to come near; and is here the emblem of an impious, cruel, and oppressive king. As the olive, fig, and vine, are said in this fable to refuse the royalty, because in consequence, they intimate, they should lose their own privileges, we learn that to be invested with power for the public good can be no privilege to the sovereign. If he discharge the office faithfully, it will plant his pillow with thorns, fill his soul with anxious cares, rob him of rest and quiet, and, in a word, will be to him a source of distress and misery. All this is represented here under the emblem of the trees losing their fatness, their sweetness and good fruits, and their cheering influence. In short, we see from this most sensible fable that the beneficent, benevolent, and highly illuminated mind, is ever averse from the love of power; and that those who do seek it are the thoughtless, the vain, the ambitious, and those who wish for power merely for the purpose of self-gratification; persons who have neither the disposition nor the knowledge to use power for the advantage of the community; and who, while they boast great things, and make great pretensions and promises, are the tyrants of the people, and often through their ambition, like the bramble in the fable kindle a flame of foreign or domestic war, in which their subjects are consumed. The sleepless nights and corroding cares of sovereignty, are most forcibly described by a poet of our own, whose equal in describing the inward workings of the human heart, in all varieties of character and circumstances, has never appeared either in ancient or modern times. Hear what he puts in the mouth of two of his care-worn kings: —

*“How many thousand of my poorest subjects  
Are at this hour asleep?—Sleep, gentle sleep,  
Nature’s soft nurse! how have I frighted thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,*

*And steep my senses in forgetfulness?  
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,  
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,*

*And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber  
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,  
Under the canopies of costly state,  
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?*

*O thou dull god! why liest thou with the vile  
In loathsome beds; and leav'st the kingly couch  
A watch-case, or a common 'larum bell?*

*Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle of the rude imperious surge;*

*And in the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads and hanging them,  
With deafening clamours, in the slippery clouds,*

*That, with the hurly, death itself awakes?  
Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy, in an hour so rude;*

*And, in the calmest and most stillest night,  
With all appliances and means to boot,  
Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down!  
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." —*

*"O hard condition! twin-born with greatness,  
Subjected to the breath of every fool,  
Whose sense no more can feel but his own wringing!*

*What infinite heart's ease must kings neglect,  
That private men enjoy!  
And what have kings, that privates have not too,  
Save ceremony, save general ceremony?" —*

*“‘Tis not the balm, the scepter, and the ball,  
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,  
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,  
The farced title running ‘fore the king,*

*The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp  
That beats upon the high shore of this world,  
No, not all these, thrice gorgeous ceremony,  
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,  
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave.”*

SHAKESPEARE

This is precisely the sentiment expressed in the denial of the olive, fig tree, and vine.

**Verse 15. *Come and put your trust in any shadow*** The vain boast of the would-be sovereign; and of the man who is seeking to be put into power by the suffrages of the people. All promise, no performance.

***Let fire come out of the bramble*** A strong catachresis. The bramble was too low to give shelter to any tree; and so far from being able to consume others, that the smallest fire will reduce it to ashes, and that in the shortest time. Hence the very transitory mirth of fools is said to be like the cracking of thorns under a pot. Abimelech was the bramble; and the ceders of Lebanon, all the nobles and people of Israel. Could they therefore suppose that such a low-born, uneducated, cruel, and murderous man, could be a proper protector, or a humane governor? He who could imbrue his hands in the blood of his brethren in order to get into power, was not likely to stop at any means to retain that power when possessed. If, therefore, they took him for their king, they might rest assured that desolation and blood would mark the whole of his reign. The condensed moral of the whole fable is this: Weak, worthless, and wicked men, will ever be foremost to thrust themselves into power; and, in the end, to bring ruin upon themselves, and on the unhappy people over whom they preside.

**Verse 20. *Let fire come out from Abimelech*** As the thorn or bramble may be the means of kindling other wood, because it may be easily ignited;

so shall Abimelech be the cause of kindling a fire of civil discord among you, that shall consume the rulers and great men of your country. A prophetic declaration of what would take place.

**Verse 21. *Went to Beer*** Mr. Maundrell, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 64, 5th edit., mentions a place of this name, which he thinks to be that to which Jotham fled, and supposed to be the same as Mishmash, 1 Samuel 14:5, 31. It is situated, he says, towards the south, on an easy declivity; and has a fountain of excellent water at the bottom of the hill from which it has taken its name.

**Verse 23. *God sent an evil spirit*** He permitted jealousies to take place which produced factions; and these factions produced insurrections, civil contentions, and slaughter.

**Verse 25. *The men of Shechem set liers in wait*** It pleased God to punish this bad man by the very persons who had contributed to his iniquitous elevation. So God often makes the instruments of men's sins the means of their punishment. It is likely that although Abimelech had his chief residence at Shechem, yet he frequently went to Ophrah, the city of his father; his claim to which there was none to oppose, as he had slain all his brethren. It was probably in his passage between those two places that the Shechemites had posted cut-throats, in order to assassinate him; as such men had no moral principle, they robbed and plundered all who came that way.

**Verse 26. *Gaal the son of Ebed*** Of this person we know no more than is here told. He was probably one of the descendants of the Canaanites, who hoped from the state of the public mind, and their disaffection to Abimelech, to cause a revolution, and thus to restore the ancient government as it was under Hamor, the father of Shechem.

**Verse 28. *Zebul his officer*** פקידו pekido, his overseer; probably governor of Shechem in his absence.

**Verse 29. *Would to God this people were under my hand*** The very words and conduct of a sly, hypocritical demagogue.

***Increase thine army, and come out.*** When he found his party strong, and the public feeling warped to his side, then he appears to have sent a challenge to Abimelech, to come out and fight him.

**Verse 31. *They fortify the city against thee.*** Under pretense of repairing the walls and towers, they were actually putting the place in a state of defense, intending to seize on the government as soon as they should find Abimelech coming against them. Fortifying the city may mean seducing the inhabitants from their loyalty to Abimelech.

**Verse 35. *Stood in the entering of the gate*** Having probably got some intimation of the designs of Zebul and Abimelech.

**Verse 37. *By the plain of Meonenim.*** Some translate, by the way of the oaks, or oaken groves; others, by the way of the magicians, or regards of the times, as in our margin. Probably it was a place in which augurs and soothsayers dwelt.

**Verse 45. *And sowed it with salt.*** Intending that the destruction of this city should be a perpetual memorial of his achievements. The salt was not designed to render it barren, as some have imagined; for who would think of cultivating a city? but as salt is an emblem of incorruption and perpetuity, it was no doubt designed to perpetuate the memorial of this transaction, and as a token that he wished this desolation to be eternal. This sowing a place with salt was a custom in different nations to express permanent desolation and abhorrence. Sigonius observes that when the city of Milan was taken, in A.D. 1162, the walls were razed, and it was sown with salt. And Brantome informs us that it was ancient custom in France to sow the house of a man with salt, who had been declared a traitor to his king. Charles IX., king of France, the most base and perfidious of human beings, caused the house of the Admiral Coligni (whom he and the Duke of Guise caused to be murdered, with thousands more of Protestants, on the eve of St. Bartholomew, 1572) to be sown with salt! How many houses have been since sown with salt in France by the just judgments of God, in revenge for the massacre of the Protestants on the eve of St. Bartholomew! Yet for all this God's wrath is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.



**Verse 46. *A hold of the house of the god Berith.*** This must mean the precincts of the temple, as we find there were a thousand men and women together in that place.

**Verse 53. *A piece of a millstone*** פלח רכב pelach recheb, a piece of a chariot wheel; but the word is used in other places for upper millstones, and is so understood here by the Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic.

***And all to break his skull.*** A most nonsensical version of את גלגלתו ותרץ vattarits eth gulgolto, which is literally, And she brake, or fractured, his skull. Plutarch, in his life of Pyrrhus, observes that this king was killed at the siege of Thebes, by a piece of a tile, which a woman threw upon his head.

**Verse 54. *Draw thy sword, and slay me*** It was a disgrace to be killed by a woman; on this account, Seneca the tragedian deplores the death of Hercules: —

*O turpe fatum! femina Herculeae necis  
 Autor feritur.  
 HERC. OETAeus, ver. 1177.*

*“O dishonorable fate! a woman is reported to  
 have been author of the death of Hercules.”*

Abimelech was also afraid that if he fell thus mortally wounded into the hands of his enemies they might treat him with cruelty and insult.

**Verse 56. *Thus God rendered, etc.*** Both the fratricide Abimelech, and the unprincipled men of Shechem, had the iniquity visited upon them of which they had been guilty. Man’s judgment may be avoided; but there is no escape from the judgments of God. I HAVE said that the fable of Jotham is the oldest, and perhaps the best, in the world; and referred for other particulars to the end of the chapter. On the general subject of fable, apologue, and parable, the reader will find a considerable dissertation at the end of Matthew 13:58; I shall add but a few things here, and they shall refer to the oldest collection of fables extant. These are of Indian origin, and are preserved in the Sanscreeet, from which they have been translated into different languages, both Asiatic and European, under various titles.

The collection is called Hitopadesa, and the author Veshnoo Sarma; but they are known in Europe by The Tales and Fables of Bidpay, or Pilpay, an ancient Indian Philosopher. Of this collection Sir William Jones takes the following notice: — “The fables of Veshnoo Sarma, whom we ridiculously call Pilpay, are the most beautiful, if not the most ancient, collection of apologues in the world. They were first translated from the Sanscreeet, in the sixth century, by Buzerchumihr, or bright as the sun, the chief physician, and afterwards the vizir of the great Anushirwan; and are extant under various names, in more than twenty languages. But their original title is Hitopadesa, or amicable instruction; and as the very existence of AEsop, whom the Arabs believe to have been an Abyssinian, appears rather doubtful, I am not disinclined to suppose that the first moral fables which appeared in Europe were of Indian or AEthiopian origin.” Mr. Frazer, in his collection of Oriental MSS. at the end of his History of Nadir Shah, gives us the following account of this curious and

Abdul Mala Nasser Allah Mustofi; and this is that *Kulila Dumna* which is now extant. As this latter had too many Arabic verses and obsolete phrases in it, Molana Ali beg Hessein Vaes, at the request of Emir Soheli, keeper of the seals to Sultan Hossein Mirza, put it into a more modern style, and gave it the title of *Anuar Soheli*. "In the year 1002, the great mogulhul Jalal o Din Mohommed Akbar ordered his own secretary and vizir, the learned Abul Fazl, to illustrate the obscure passages, abridge the long digressions, and put it into such a style as would be most familiar to all capacities; which he accordingly did, and gave it the name of *Ayar Danish*, or the *Criterion of Wisdom*." This far Mr. Frazer, under the word *Ayar Danish*. "In the year 1709," says Dr. Wilkins, "the *Kulila Dumna*, the Persian version of Abul Mala Nasser Allah Mustofi, made in the 515th year of the Hegira, was translated into French, with the title of *Les Conseils et les Maximes de Pilpay, Philosophe Indien, sur les divers Etats de la Vie*. This edition resembles the *Hitopadesa* more than any other then seen; and is evidently the immediate original of the English *Instructive and entertaining Fables of Pilpay*, an ancient Indian philosopher, which, in 1775, had gone through five editions. "The *Anuar Soheli*, above mentioned, about the year 1540, was rendered into the Turkish language; and the translator is said to have bestowed twenty years' labor upon it. In the year 1724, this edition M. Galland began to translate into French, and the first four chapters were then published; but, in the year 1778, M. Cardonne completed the work, in three volumes, giving it the name of *Contes et Fables Indiennes de Bidpai et de Lokman; traduites d' Ali Tcheleby ben Saleh, amateur Turk; 'Indian Tales and Fables of Bidpay and Lockman, translated from Aly Tcheleby ben Saleh, a Turkish author.'*" The fables of *Lockman* were published in Arabic and Latin, with notes, by Erpenius, 4to. Amstel., 1636; and by the celebrated Golius, at the end of his edition of Erpen's Arabic Grammar, Lugd. Bat., 1656, with additional notes; and also in the edition of the same Grammar, by Albert Schultens, Lugd. Bat., 1748, 4to. They are only thirty-seven in number. Of the *Hitopadesa*, or fables of *Veshnoo Sarma*, we have two very elegant English translations from the original Sanscreeet: one by Sir William Jones, printed in his works, 4to., vol. 6, Lond. 1799; the other by the father of Sanscreeet literature in Europe, Dr. Charles Wilkins, of the India House, 8vo., Bath, 1787, with a collection of very important notes. The *Bahar Danush*, or *Sea of Wisdom*, abounds with maxims, apothegms, etc., similar to those in the preceding

works; this was most faithfully translated from the Persian, by Dr. Jonathan Scott, late Persian secretary to his excellency Warren Hastings, published in three vols. 12mo., with notes, Shrewsbury, 1799. This is the most correct version of any Persian work yet offered to the public. The original is by Einaut Ullah. Of these works it may be said, they contain the wisdom of the oriental world; and many of the numerous maxims interspersed through them yield in importance only to those in the sacred writings. The fables attributed to AEsop have been repeatedly published in Greek and Latin, as well as in all the languages of Europe, and are well known. Those of Phaedrus are in general only a metrical version of the fables of AEsop. The compositions of Lamentations Fontaine, in French, and those of Mr. Gay, in English, are very valuable.

## CHAPTER 10

*Tola judges Israel twenty-three years, 1, 2. Jair is judge twenty-two years, 3-5. After him the Israelites rebel against God, and are delivered into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites eighteen years, 6-9. They humble themselves, and God reproves them, 10-14. They put away their strange gods, and gather together against the Ammonites, 15-17. The chiefs of Gilead inquire concerning a captain to head them against the Ammonites, 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10.

**Verse 1. *Tola the son of Puah*** As this Tola continued twenty-three years a judge of Israel after the troubles of Abimelech's reign, it is likely that the land had rest, and that the enemies of the Israelites had made no hostile incursions into the land during his presidency and that of Jair; which, together continued forty-five years.

**Verse 4. *He had thirty sons, etc.*** It appears that there was both peace and prosperity during the time that Jair governed Israel; he had, it seems, provided for his family, and given a village to each of his thirty sons; which were, in consequence, called Havoth Jair or the villages of Jair. Their riding on thirty ass colts seems to intimate that they were persons of consideration, and kept up a certain dignity in their different departments.

**Verse 6. *And served Baalim*** They became universal idolaters, adopting every god of the surrounding nations. Baalim and Ashtaroth may signify gods and goddesses in general. These are enumerated: 1. The gods of Syria; Bel and Saturn, or Jupiter and Astarte. 2. Gods of Zidon; Ashtaroth, Astarte or Venus. 3. The gods of Moab; Chemosh. 4. Gods of the children of Ammon; Milcom. 5. Gods of the Philistines; Dagon. See 1 Kings 11:33, and 1 Samuel 5:2. These are called gods because their images and places of worship were multiplied throughout the land.

**Verse 7. *The anger of the Lord was hot*** This Divine displeasure was manifested in delivering them into the hands of the Philistines and the

Ammonites. The former dwelt on the western side of Jordan; the latter, on the eastern: and it appears that they joined their forces on this occasion to distress and ruin the Israelites, though the Ammonites were the most active.

**Verse 11. *And the Lord said*** By what means these reproofs were conveyed to the Israelites, we know not: it must have been by an angel, a prophet, or some holy man inspired for the occasion.

**Verse 15. *We have sinned*** The reprehension of this people was kind, pointed, and solemn; and their repentance deep. And they gave proofs that their repentance was genuine, by putting away all their idols: but they were ever fickle and uncertain.

**Verse 16. *And his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.*** What a proof of the philanthropy of God! Here his compassions moved on a small scale; but it was the same principle that led him to give his Son Jesus Christ to be a sacrifice for the sins of the WHOLE world. God grieves for the miseries to which his creatures are reduced by their own sins. Be astonished, ye heavens, at this; and shout for joy, all ye inhabitants of the earth! for, through the love whence this compassion flowed, God has visited and redeemed a lost world!

**Verse 17. *The children of Ammon were gathered together*** Literally, they cried against Israel—they sent out criers in different directions to stir up all the enemies of Israel; and when they had made a mighty collection, they encamped in Gilead.

**Verse 18. *What man is he that will begin to fight*** It appears that, although the spirit of patriotism had excited the people at large to come forward against their enemies, yet they had no general, none to lead them forth to battle. God, however, who had accepted their sincere repentance, raised them up an able captain in the person of Jephthah; and in him the suffrages of the people were concentrated, as we shall see in the following chapter. In those ancient times much depended on the onset; a war was generally terminated in one battle, the first impression was therefore of great consequence, and it required a person skillful, valorous, and strong, to head the attack. Jephthah was a person in whom all these qualifications

appear to have met. When God purposes to deliver, he, in the course of his providence, will find out, employ, and direct the proper means.

## CHAPTER 11

*The history of Jephthah, and his covenant with the Gileadites, 1-10. He is elected by the people, 11. Sends an embassy to the king of the Ammonites, to inquire why they invaded Israel; and receives an answer, to which he sends back a spirited reply, 12-27. This is disregarded by the Ammonites, and Jephthah prepares for battle, 28, 29. His vow, 30, 31. He attacks and defeats them, 32, 33. On his return to Mizpeh he is met by his daughter, whom, according to his vow, he dedicates to the Lord, 34-40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. Now Jephthah-was the son of a harlot** I think the word זונה zonah, which we here render harlot, should be translated, as is contended for on Joshua 2:1, viz. a hostess, keeper of an inn or tavern for the accommodation of travelers; and thus it is understood by the Targum of Jonathan on this place: והוא בר אתתא פונדקיתא vehu bar ittetha pundekitha, “and he was the son of a woman, a tavern keeper.” See the note referred to above. She was very probably a Canaanite, as she is called, Judges 11:2, a strange woman, אישה אחרת ishshah achereth, a woman of another race; and on this account his brethren drove him from the family, as he could not have a full right to the inheritance, his mother not being an Israelite.

**Verse 3. There were gathered vain men to Jephthah** אנשים ריקים anashim reykim, empty men-persons destitute of good sense, and profligate in their manners. The word may, however, mean in this place poor persons, without property, and without employment. The versions in general consider them as plunderers.

**Verse 4. The children of Ammon made war** They had invaded the land of Israel, and were now encamped in Gilead. See Judges 10:17.

**Verse 6. Come, and be our captain** The Israelites were assembled in Mizpeh, but were without a captain to lead them against the Ammonites.



And we find, from the conclusion of the preceding chapter, that they offered the command to any that would accept it.

**Verse 8. *Therefore we turn again to thee now*** We are convinced that we have dealt unjustly by thee, and we wish now to repair our fault, and give thee this sincere proof of our regret for having acted unjustly, and of our confidence in thee.

**Verse 11. *Jephthah went with the elders*** The elders had chosen him for their head; but, to be valid, this choice must be confirmed by the people; therefore, it is said, the people made him head. But even this did not complete the business; God must be brought in as a party to this transaction; and therefore Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord—the terms made with the elders and the people on which he had accepted the command of the army; and, being sure of the Divine approbation, he entered on the work with confidence.

**Verse 12. *Jephthah sent messengers*** He wished the Ammonites to explain their own motives for undertaking a war against Israel; as then the justice of his cause would appear more forcibly to the people.

**Verse 13. *From Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan*** That is, all the land that had formerly belonged to the Amorites, and to the Moabites, who it seems were confederates on this occasion.

**Verse 22. *From the wilderness even unto Jordan.*** From Arabia Deserta on the east to Jordan on the west.

**Verse 23. *The Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites*** Jephthah shows that the Israelites did not take the land of the Moabites or Ammonites, but that of the Amorites, which they had conquered from Sihon their king, who had, without cause or provocation, attacked them; and although the Amorites had taken the lands in question from the Ammonites, yet the title by which Israel held them was good, because they took them not from the Ammonites, but conquered them from the Amorites. So now the Lord hath dispossessed the Amorites. — The circumstances in which the Israelites were when they were attacked by the Amorites, plainly proved, that, unless Jehovah had helped them, they must have been overcome. God defeated the Amorites, and made a grant of

their lands to the Israelites; and they had, in consequence, possessed them for three hundred years, Judges 11:26.

**Verse 24. *Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee***  
 As if he had said: “It is a maxim with you, as it is among all nations, that the lands which they conceive to be given them by their gods, they have an absolute right to, and should not relinquish them to any kind of claimant. You suppose that the land which you possess was given you by your god Chemosh and therefore you will not relinquish what you believe you hold by a Divine right. Now, we know that Jehovah, our God, who is the Lord of heaven and earth, has given the Israelites the land of the Amorites; and therefore we will not give it up.” The ground of Jephthah’s remonstrance was sound and good. 1. The Ammonites had lost their lands in their contests with the Amorites. 2. The Israelites conquered these lands from the Amorites, who had waged a most unprincipled war against them. 3. God, who is the Maker of heaven and earth had given those very lands as a Divine grant to the Israelites. 4. In consequence of this they had possession of them for upwards of three hundred years. 5. These lands were never reclaimed by the Ammonites, though they had repeated opportunities of doing it, whilst the Israelites dwelt in Heshbon, in Aroer, and in the coasts of Arnon; but they did not reclaim them because they knew that the Israelites held them legally. The present pretensions of Ammon were unsupported and unjustifiable.

**Verse 27. *The Lord the Judge be judge-between the children of Israel*** If you be right, and we be wrong, then Jehovah, who is the sovereign and incorruptible Judge, shall determine in your favor; and to Him I submit the righteousness of my cause.

**Verse 29. *Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah*** The Lord qualified him for the work he had called him to do, and thus gave him the most convincing testimony that his cause was good.

**Verse 31. *Shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.*** The text is **והיה ליהוה והעליתיהו עולה** vehayah layhovah, vemaalithihu olah; the translation of which, according to the most accurate Hebrew scholars, is this: I will consecrate it to the Lord, or I will offer it for a burnt-offering; that is, “If it be a thing fit for a burnt-offering, it shall be made one; if fit for the service of God, it shall be consecrated to

him.” That conditions of this kind must have been implied in the vow, is evident enough; to have been made without them, it must have been the vow of a heathen, or a madman. If a dog had met him, this could not have been made a burnt-offering; and if his neighbor or friend’s wife, son, or daughter, etc., had been returning from a visit to his family, his vow gave him no right over them. Besides, human sacrifices were ever an abomination to the Lord; and this was one of the grand reasons why God drove out the Canaanites, etc., because they offered their sons and daughters to Molech in the fire, i.e., made burnt-offerings of them, as is generally supposed. That Jephthah was a deeply pious man, appears in the whole of his conduct; and that he was well acquainted with the law of Moses, which prohibited all such sacrifices, and stated what was to be offered in sacrifice, is evident enough from his expostulation with the king and people of Ammon, Judges 11:14-27. Therefore it must be granted that he never made that rash vow which several suppose he did; nor was he capable, if he had, of executing it in that most shocking manner which some Christian writers (“tell it not in Gath”) have contended for. He could not commit a crime which himself had just now been an executor of God’s justice to punish in others. It has been supposed that “the text itself might have been read differently in former times; if instead of the words **עולה** **והעליתיהו**, I will offer It a burnt-offering, we read **והעליתיהוּא עולה**, I will offer HIM (i.e., the Lord) a burnt-offering: this will make a widely different sense, more consistent with everything that is sacred; and it is formed by the addition of only a single letter, (א aleph,) and the separation of the pronoun from the verb. Now the letter א aleph is so like the letter ע ain, which immediately follows it in the word **עולה** olah, that the one might easily have been lost in the other, and thus the pronoun be joined to the verb as at present, where it expresses the thing to be sacrificed instead of the person to whom the sacrifice was to be made. With this emendation the passage will read thus: Whatsoever cometh forth of the doors or my house to meet me-shall be the Lord’s; and I will offer HIM a burnt-offering.” For this criticism there is no absolute need, because the pronoun **הוּ hu**, in the above verse, may with as much propriety be translated him as it. The latter part of the verse is, literally, And I will offer him a burnt-offering, **עולה** olah, not **לעולה** leolah, FOR a burnt-offering, which is the common Hebrew form when for is intended to

be expressed. This is strong presumption that the text should be thus understood: and this avoids the very disputable construction which is put on the וּ vau, in **והעליתיהו** veehalithihu, OR I will offer It up, instead of AND I will offer HIM a burnt-offering. "From Judges 11:39 it appears evident that Jephthah's daughter was not SACRIFICED to God, but consecrated to him in a state of perpetual virginity; for the text says, She knew no man, for this was a statute in Israel. **וַתְּהִי חֹק בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל** vattehi chok beyishrael; viz., that persons thus dedicated or consecrated to God, should live in a state of unchangeable celibacy. Thus this celebrated place is, without violence to any part of the text, or to any proper rule of construction, cleared of all difficulty, and caused to speak a language consistent with itself, and with the nature of God." Those who assert that Jephthah did sacrifice his daughter, attempt to justify the opinion from the barbarous usages of those times: but in answer to this it may be justly observed, that Jephthah was now under the influence of the Spirit of God, Judges 11:29; and that Spirit could not permit him to imbrue his hands in the blood of his own child; and especially under the pretense of offering a pleasing sacrifice to that God who is the Father of mankind, and the Fountain of love, mercy, and compassion. The versions give us but little assistance in clearing the difficulties of the text. In the Targum of Jonathan there is a remarkable gloss which should be mentioned, and from which it will appear that the Targumist supposed that the daughter of Jephthah was actually sacrificed: "And he fulfilled the vow which he had vowed upon her; and she knew no man: and it was made a statute in Israel, that no man should offer his son or his daughter for a burnt-offering, as did Jephthah the Gileadite, who did not consult Phinehas the priest; for if he had consulted Phinehas the priest, he would have redeemed her with money." The Targumist refers here to the law, Leviticus 27:1-5, where the Lord prescribes the price at which either males or females, who had been vowed to the Lord, might be redeemed. "When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons shall be for the Lord at thy estimation: the male from twenty years old even unto sixty, shall be fifty shekels of silver; and if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels; and from five years old unto twenty years, the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten." This also is an argument that the daughter of Jephthah was not sacrificed; as the father had it in his power, at a very moderate price, to have redeemed her: and surely the blood of his daughter must have been of more

value in his sight than thirty shekels of silver. Dr. Hales has entered largely into the subject: his observations may be seen at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 33. *Twenty cities*** That is, he either took or destroyed twenty cities of the Ammonites, and completely routed their whole army.

**Verse 34. *With timbrels and with dances*** From this instance we find it was an ancient custom for women to go out to meet returning conquerors with musical instruments, songs, and dances; and that it was continued afterwards is evident from the instance given 1 Samuel 18:6, where David was met, on his return from the defeat of Goliath and the Philistines, by women from all the cities of Israel, with singing and dancing, and various instruments of music.

**Verse 35. *Thou hast brought me very low*** He was greatly distressed to think that his daughter, who was his only child, should be, in consequence of his vow, prevented from continuing his family in Israel; for it is evident that he had not any other child, for besides her, says the text, he had neither son nor daughter, Judges 11:34. He might, therefore, well be grieved that thus his family was to become extinct in Israel.

**Verse 36. *And she said unto him*** What a pattern of filial piety and obedience! She was at once obedient, pious, and patriotic. A woman to have no offspring was considered to be in a state of the utmost degradation among the Hebrews; but she is regardless of all this, seeing her father is in safety, and her country delivered.

**Verse 37. *I and my fellows*** Whether she meant the young women of her own acquaintance, or those who had been consecrated to God in the same way, though on different accounts, is not quite clear; but it is likely she means her own companions: and her going up and down upon the mountains may signify no more than her paying each of them a visit at their own houses, previously to her being shut up at the tabernacle; and this visiting of each at their own home might require the space of two months. This I am inclined to think is the meaning of this difficult clause.

**Verse 39. *And she knew no man*** She continued a virgin all the days of her life.

**Verse 40. To lament the daughter of Jephthah** I am satisfied that this is not a correct translation of the original **לֵבַת יִפְתָּח לַתְּנוּת** lethannoth lebath yiphtach. Houbigant translates the whole verse thus: Sed iste mos apud Israel invaluit, ut virgines Israel, temporibus diversis, irent ad filiam Jepthe-ut eam quotannis dies quatuor consolarentur; “But this custom prevailed in Israel that the virgins of Israel went at different times, four days in the year, to the daughter of Jephthah, that they might comfort her.” This verse also gives evidence that the daughter of Jephthah was not sacrificed: nor does it appear that the custom or statute referred to here lasted after the death of Jephthah’s daughter. THE following is Dr. Hales’ exposition of Jephthah’s vow: — “When Jephthah went forth to battle against the Ammonites, he vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, ‘If thou wilt surely give the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall either be the Lord’s, or I will offer it up (for) a burnt-offering,’ Judges 11:30, 31. According to this rendering of the two conjunctions, ׀ vau in the last clause ‘either,’ ‘or,’ (which is justified by the Hebrew idiom thus, ‘He that curseth his father and his mother,’ Exodus 21:17, is necessarily rendered disjunctively, ‘His father or his mother,’ by the Septuagint, Vulgate, Chaldee, and English, confirmed by Matthew 15:4, the paucity of connecting particles in that language making it necessary that this conjunction should often be understood disjunctively,) the vow consisted of two parts: 1. That what person soever met him should be the Lord’s or be dedicated to his service; and, 2. That what beast soever met him, if clean, should be offered up for a burnt-offering unto the Lord. “This rendering and this interpretation is warranted by the Levitical law about vows. “The **נֶדֶר** neder, or vow, in general, included either persons, beasts, or things dedicated to the Lord for pious uses; which, if it was a simple vow, was redeemable at certain prices, if the person repented of his vow, and wished to commute it for money, according to the age or sex of the person, Leviticus 27:1-8: this was a wise regulation to remedy rash vows. But if the vow was accompanied with **חֵרֶם** cherem, devotement, it was irredeemable, as in the following case, Leviticus 27:28. “Notwithstanding, no devotement which a man shall devote unto the Lord, (either) of man, or beast, or of land of his own property, shall be sold or redeemed. Every thing devoted is most holy

to the Lord. “Here the three **ו** vau in the original should necessarily be rendered disjunctively, or as the last actually is in our translation, because there are three distinct subjects of devotement to be applied to distinct uses, the man to be dedicated to the service of the Lord, as Samuel by his mother Hannah, 1 Samuel 1:11; the cattle, if clean, such as oxen, sheep, goats, turtle-doves, or pigeons, to be sacrificed; and if unclean, as camels, horses, asses, to be employed for carrying burdens in the service of the tabernacle or temple; and the lands, to be sacred property. “This law therefore expressly applied in its first branch to Jephthah’s case, who had devoted his daughter to the Lord, or opened his mouth to the Lord, and therefore could not go back, as he declared in his grief at seeing his daughter and only child coming to meet him with timbrels and dances: she was, therefore necessarily devoted, but with her own consent to perpetual virginity in the service of the tabernacle, Judges 11:36, 37; and such service was customary, for in the division of the spoils taken in the first Midianitish war, of the whole number of captive virgins the Lord’s tribute was thirty-two persons, Numbers 31:15-40. This instance appears to be decisive of the nature of her devotement. “Her father’s extreme grief on the occasion and her requisition of a respite for two months to bewail her virginity, are both perfectly natural. Having no other issue, he could only look forward to the extinction of his name or family; and a state of celibacy, which is reproachful among women everywhere, was peculiarly so among the Israelites, and was therefore no ordinary sacrifice on her part; who, though she generously gave up, could not but regret the loss of, becoming ‘a mother in Israel.’ And he did with her according to his vow which he had vowed, and she knew no man, or remained a virgin, all her life, Judges 11:34-39. “There was also another case of devotement which was irredeemable, and follows the former, Leviticus 27:29. This case differs materially from the former. “1. It is confined to PERSONS devoted, omitting beasts and lands. 2. It does not relate to private property, as in the foregoing. And, 3. The subject of it was to be utterly destroyed, instead of being most holy unto the Lord. This law, therefore, related to aliens, or public enemies devoted to destruction either by GOD, the people, or by the magistrate. Of all these we have instances in Scripture. “1. The Amalekites and Canaanites were devoted by God himself. Saul was, therefore, guilty of a breach of the law for sparing Agag the king of the Amalekites, as Samuel reproached him, 1 Samuel 15:33: ‘And Samuel

hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord;’ not as a sacrifice, according to Voltaire, but as a criminal, whose sword had made many women childless. By this law the Midianitish women who had been spared in battle were slain, Numbers 31:14-17. “2. In Mount Hor, when the Israelites were attacked by Arad, king of the southern Canaanites, who took some of them prisoners, they vowed a vow unto the Lord that they would utterly destroy the Canaanites and their cities, if the Lord should deliver them into their hand, which the Lord ratified; whence the place was called Hormah, because the vow was accompanied by cherem, or devotement to destruction, Numbers 21:1-3; and the vow was accomplished, Judges 1:17. “3. In the Philistine war Saul adjured the people, and cursed any one who should taste food till the evening. His own son Jonathan inadvertently ate a honey-comb, not knowing his father’s oath, for which Saul sentenced him to die. But the people interposed, and rescued him for his public services; thus assuming the power of dispensing, in their collective capacity, with an unreasonable oath. This latter case, therefore, is utterly irrelative to Jephthah’s vow, which did not regard a foreign enemy or a domestic transgressor devoted to destruction, but on the contrary was a vow of thanksgiving, and therefore properly came under the former case. And that Jephthah could not possibly have sacrificed his daughter, (according to the vulgar opinion,) may appear from the following considerations: — “1. The sacrifice of children to Molech was an abomination to the Lord, of which in numberless passages he expresses his detestation, and it was prohibited by an express law, under pain of death, as a defilement of God’s sanctuary, and a profanation of his holy name, Leviticus 20:2, 3. Such a sacrifice, therefore, unto the Lord himself, must be a still higher abomination, and there is no precedent of any such under the law in the OLD TESTAMENT. “2. The case of Isaac before the law is irrelevant, for Isaac was not sacrificed, and it was only proposed for a trial of Abraham’s faith. “3. No father, merely by his own authority, could put an offending, much less an innocent, child to death upon any account, without the sentence of the magistrate, (Deuteronomy 21:18-21,) and the consent of the people, as in Jonathan’s case. “4. The Mischna, or traditional law of the Jews is pointedly against it; ver. 212. ‘If a Jew should devote his son or daughter, his man or maid servant, who are Hebrews, the devotement would be void, because no man can devote what is not his own, or whose life he has not the absolute disposal of.’ These



arguments appear to be decisive against the sacrifice; and that Jephthah could not have devoted his daughter to celibacy against her will is evident from the history, and from the high estimation in which she was always held by the daughters of Israel for her filial duty and her hapless fate, which they celebrated by a regular anniversary commemoration four days in the year; Judges 11:40.” -*New Analysis of Chronology*, vol. iii., p. 319. The celebrated sacrifice of Iphigenia has been supposed by many learned men to be a fable founded on this account of Jephthah’s daughter; and M. Deuteronomy Lavour, *Conference de la Fable avec l’ Histoire Sainte*, has thus traced the parallel: — “The fable of Iphigenia, offered in sacrifice by Agamemnon her father, sung by so many poets, related after them by so many historians, and celebrated in the Greek and French theatres, has been

house, God so permitted it that his only daughter was the first who met him. Jephthah was struck with terror at the sight of her, and tearing his garments, he exclaimed, Alas! alas! my daughter, thou dost exceedingly trouble me; for I have opened my mouth against thee, unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. His daughter, full of courage and piety, understanding the purport of his vow, exhorted him to accomplish what he had vowed to the Lord, which to her would be exceedingly agreeable, seeing the Lord had avenged him of his and his country's enemies; desiring liberty only to go on the mountains with her companions, and to bewail the dishonor with which sterility was accompanied in Israel, because each hoped to see the Messiah born of his or her family. Jephthah could not deny her this request. She accordingly went, and at the end of two months returned, and put herself into the hands of her father, who did with her according to his vow. "Several of the rabbins, and many very learned Christian expositors, believe that Jephthah's daughter was not really sacrificed, but that her virginity was consecrated to God, and that she separated from all connection with the world; which indeed seems to be implied in the sacred historian's account: And she knew no man. This was a kind of mysterious death, because it caused her to lose all hope of the glory of a posterity from which the Messiah might descend. From this originated the custom, observed afterwards in Israel, that on a certain season in the year the virgins assembled themselves on the mountains to bewail the daughter of Jephthah for the space of four days. Let us now consider the leading characters of the fable of Iphigenia. According to good chronological reckonings, the time of the one and of the other very nearly agree. The opinion that the name of Iphigenia is taken from the daughter of Jephthah, appears well founded; yea, the conformity is palpable. By a very inconsiderable change Iphigenia makes Iphthygenia, which signifies literally, the daughter of Jephthah. Agamemnon, who is described as a valiant warrior and admirable captain, was chosen by the Greeks for their prince and general against the Trojans, by the united consent of all Greece, assembled together at Aulis in Baeotia. "As soon as he had accepted the command, he sent ambassadors to Priam, king of Troy, to demand satisfaction for the rape of Helen, of which the Greeks complained. The Trojans refusing to grant this, Agamemnon, to gain over to his side the gods, who appeared irritated against the Greeks and opposed to the success of their enterprise, after having sacrificed to them went to consult

their interpreter, Chalchas, who declared that the gods, and particularly Diana, would not be appeased but by the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon. “Cicero, in his Offices, says that Agamemnon, in order to engage the protection of the gods in his war against the Trojans, vowed to sacrifice to them the most beautiful of all that should be born in his kingdom; and as it was found that his daughter Iphigenia surpassed all the rest in beauty, he believed himself bound by his vow to sacrifice her. Cicero condemns this, rightly judging that it would have been a less evil to have falsified his vow than to have committed parricide. This account of Cicero renders the fable entirely conformable to the history. “Agamemnon was at first struck with and troubled at this order, nevertheless consented to it: but he afterwards regretted the loss of his daughter. He is represented by the poets as deliberating, and being in doubt whether the gods could require such a parricide; but at last a sense of his duty and honor overcame his paternal affection, and his daughter, who had warmly exhorted him to fulfill his vow to the gods, was led to the altar amidst the lamentations of her companions; as Ovid and Euripides relate, see *Met.*, lib. 13. “Some authors have thought she really was sacrificed; but others, more humane, say she was caught up in a cloud by the gods, who, contented with the intended sacrifice, substituted a hind in her place, with which the sacrifice was completed. Dictys Cretensis says that this animal was substituted to save Iphigenia. “The chronology of times so remote cannot, in many respects, but be uncertain. Both the Greeks and Romans grant that there was nothing else than fables before the first Olympiad, the beginning of which was at least four hundred and fifty years after the destruction of Troy, and two hundred and forty years after Solomon. As to the time of Solomon, nothing can be more certain than what is related in the sixth chapter of the first book of Kings, that from the going out of Egypt, under Moses, till the time in which he began to build the temple, was four hundred and eighty years. “According to the common opinion, the taking of Troy is placed one hundred and eighty years before the reign of Solomon; but his reign preceded Homer three centuries, according to some learned men, and always at least one century by those who related it lowest. Indeed, there is much uncertainty in fixing the express time in which Homer flourished. “Pausanias found so much difference concerning this in authors, that he was at a loss how to judge of it. However, it is sufficient for us that it was granted that Solomon was at least a century

before Homer, who wrote more than two centuries after the taking of Troy and who is the most ancient historian of this famous siege.”

## CHAPTER 12

*The Ephraimites are incensed against Jephthah, because he did not call them to war against the Ammonites; and threaten his destruction, 1. He vindicates himself, 2, 3; and arms the Gileadites against the men of Ephraim; they fight against them, and kill forty-two thousand Ephraimites at the passages of Jordan, 4-6. Jephthah dies, having judged Israel six years, 7. Ibzan judge seven years, 8. His posterity and death, 9, 10. Elon judge ten years, and dies, 11, 12. Abdon judge eight years, 13. His posterity and death, 14, 15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1.** *The men of Ephraim gathered themselves together* וַיִּצְעֲקוּ

vaiyitstaek, they called each other to arms; summoning all their tribe and friends to arm themselves to destroy Jephthah and the Gileadites, being jealous lest they should acquire too much power.

**Verse 3.** *I put my life in my hands* I exposed myself to the greatest difficulties and dangers. But whence did this form of speech arise? Probably from a man's laying hold of his sword, spear, or bow. "This is the defender of my life; on this, and my proper use of it, my life depends." When a man draws his sword against his foe, his enemy will naturally aim at his life; and his sword in his hand is his sole defense. It is then, Fight and conquer, or die. Thus Jephthah took his life in his hand. This phrase occurs in some other places of Scripture; see 1 Samuel 19:5; 28:21. And the words of the Conqueror, Isaiah 63:5, seem to confirm the above view of the subject: I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; i.e., by mine own arm I saved my life, and brought destruction on mine enemies.

**Verse 4.** *And fought with Ephraim* Some commentators suppose that there were two battles in which the Ephraimites were defeated: the first mentioned in the above clause; and the second occasioned by the taunting

language mentioned in the conclusion of the verse, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim. Where the point of this reproach lies, or what is the reason of it, cannot be easily ascertained.

**Verse 6. Say now Shibboleth; and he said Sibboleth** The original differs only in the first letter ס samech, instead of ש sheen; שבלת ויאמר סבלת אמר נא emar na Shibboleth, vaiyomer Sibboleth. The difference between ס seen, without a point, which when pointed is pronounced sheen, and ס samech, is supposed by many to be imperceptible. But there can be no doubt there was, to the ears of a Hebrew, a most sensible distinction. Most Europeans, and, indeed, most who have written grammars of the language, perceive scarcely any difference between the Arabic [A] seen and [A] saad; but as both those letters are radical not only in Arabic but in Hebrew, the difference of enunciation must be such as to be plainly perceivable by the ear; else it would be impossible to determine the root of a word into which either of these letters entered, except by guessing, unless by pronunciation the sounds were distinct. One to whom the Arabic is vernacular, hearing a native speak, discerns it in a moment; but the delicate enunciation of the characteristic difference between those letters ש seen and ס samech, and [A] seen and [A] saad, is seldom caught by a European. Had there been no distinction between the seen and samech but what the Masoretic point gives now, then ס samech would not have been used in the word סבלת sibboleth, but ש seen, thus שבלת: but there must have been a very remarkable difference in the pronunciation of the Ephraimites, when instead of שבלת shibboleth, an ear of corn, (see Job 24:24,) they said סבלת sibboleth, which signifies a burden, Exodus 6:6; and a heavy burden were they obliged to bear who could not pronounce this test letter. It is likely that the Ephraimites were, in reference to the pronunciation of sh, as different from the Gileadites as the people in some parts of the north of England are, in the pronunciation of the letter r, from all the other inhabitants of the land. The sound of th cannot be pronounced by the Persians in general; and yet it is a common sound among the Arabians. To this day multitudes of the German Jews cannot pronounce ת th, but put ss in the stead of it: thus for בית beith (a house) they say bess. Mr. Richardson, in his “Dissertation on the Languages, Literature, and Manners of the Eastern Nations,” prefixed to his Persian and Arabic

Dictionary, p. ii., 4to. edition, makes some observations on the different dialects which prevailed in Arabia Felix, the chief of which were the Hemyaret and Koreish; and to illustrate the point in hand, he produces the following story from the Mohammedan writers: “An envoy from one of the feudatory states, having been sent to the tobba, (the sovereign,) that prince, when he was introduced, pronounced the word T’heb, which in the Hemyaret implied, Be seated: unhappily it signified, in the native dialect of the ambassador, Precipitate thyself; and he, with a singular deference for the orders of his sovereign, threw himself instantly from the castle wall and perished.” Though the Ephraimites had not a different dialect, they had, it appears, a different pronunciation, which confounded, to others, letters of the same organ, and thus produced, not only a different sound, but even an opposite meaning. This was a sufficient test to find out an Ephraimite; and he who spake not as he was commanded, at the fords of Jordan, spoke against his own life.

***For he could not frame to pronounce it right.*** This is not a bad rendering of the original **וְלֹא יָכִי לְדַבֵּר כֹּ** *velo yachin ledabber ken*; “and they did not direct to speak it thus.” But instead of **יָכִי** *yachin*, to direct, thirteen of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS., with two ancient editions, read **יָבִין** *yabin*; “they did not understand to speak it thus.” The versions take great latitude in this verse. The Vulgate makes a paraphrase: *Dic ergo Shibboleth, quod interpretatur spica: qui respondebat Sibboleth; eadem litera spicam exprimere non valens.* “Say therefore, Shibboleth; which interpreted is an ear of corn: but he answered, Sibboleth; not being able to express an ear of corn by that letter.” In my very ancient copy of the Vulgate, probably the editio princeps, there is *sebboleth* in the first instance as the test word, and *thebboleth* as the Ephraimite pronunciation. But *cebboleth* is the reading of the Complutensian Polyglot, and is supported by one of my own MSS., yet the former reading, *thebboleth*, is found in two of my MSS. The Chaldee has **שׁוּבַלְתָּא** *shubbaltha* for the Gileaditish pronunciation, and **סַבַּלְתָּא** *subbaltha* for that of Ephraim. The Syriac has [S] *shelba* and [S] *sebla*. The Arabic has the same word, with [A] *sheen* and [A] *seen*; and adds, “He said *Sebla*, for the Ephraimites could not pronounce the letter *sheen*.” These notices, however trivial at first view, will not be thought unimportant by the Biblical critic.

**Verse 8. *And after him Ibzan*** It appears that during the administration of Jephthah, six years-Ibzan, seven years-Elon, ten years-and Abdon, eight years, (in the whole thirty-one years,) the Israelites had peace in all their borders; and we shall find by the following chapter that in this time of rest they corrupted themselves, and were afterwards delivered into the power of the Philistines. 1. WE find that Ibzan had a numerous family, sixty children; and Abdon had forty sons and thirty grandsons; and that they lived splendidly, which is here expressed by their riding on seventy young asses; what we would express by they all kept their carriages; for the riding on fine asses in those days was not less dignified than riding in coaches in ours. 2. It does not appear that any thing particular took place in the civil state of the Israelites during the time of these latter judges; nothing is said concerning their administration, whether it was good or bad; nor is any thing mentioned of the state of religion. It is likely that they enjoyed peace without, and their judges were capable of preventing discord and sedition within. Yet, doubtless, God was at work among them, though there were none to record the operations either of his hand or his Spirit; but the people who feared him no doubt bore testimony to the word of his grace.



## CHAPTER 13

*The Israelites corrupt themselves, abut are delivered into the hands of the Philistines forty years, 1. An Angel appears to the wife of Manoah, foretells the birth of her son, and gives her directions how to treat both herself and her child, who was to be a deliverer of Israel, 2-5. She informs her husband of this transaction, 6, 7. Manoah prays that the Angel may reappear; he is heard, and the Angel appears to him and his wife, and repeats his former directions concerning the mother and the child, 8-14. Manoah presents an offering to the Lord, and the Angel ascends in the flame, 15-20. Manoah is alarmed, but is comforted by the judicious rejections of his wife, 21-23. Samson is born, and begins to feel the influence of the Divine Spirit, 24, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. *Delivered them into the hand of the Philistines*** It does not appear that after Shamgar, to the present time, the Philistines were in a condition to oppress Israel, or God had not permitted them to do it; but now they have a commission, the Israelites having departed from the Lord. Nor is it evident that the Philistines had entirely subjected the Israelites, as there still appears to have been a sort of commerce between the two people. They had often vexed and made inroads upon them, but they had them not in entire subjection; see Judges 15:11.

**Verse 2. *A certain man of Zorah*** A town in the tribe of Judah, but afterwards given to Dan.

**Verse 3. *The angel of the Lord*** Generally supposed to have been the same that appeared to Moses, Joshua, Gideon, etc., and no other than the second person of the ever-blessed Trinity.

**Verse 4. *Beware-drink not wine*** As Samson was designed to be a Nazarite from the womb, it was necessary that, while his mother carried and nursed him, she should live the life of a Nazarite, neither drinking wine

nor any inebriating liquor, nor eating any kind of forbidden meat. See the account of the Nazarite and his vow in the notes on Numbers 6:2, etc.

**Verse 5. *He shall begin to deliver Israel*** Samson only began this deliverance, for it was not till the days of David that the Israelites were completely redeemed from the power of the Philistines.

**Verse 6. *But I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name*** This clause is rendered very differently by the Vulgate, the negative NOT being omitted: Quem cum interrogassem quis esset, et unde venisset, et quo nomine vocaretur, noluit mihi dicere; sed hoc respondit. “Who, when I asked who he was and whence he came, and by what name he was called, would not tell me; but this he said,” etc. The negative is also wanting in the Septuagint, as it stands in the Complutensian Polyglot: **καὶ ἠρωτῶν αὐτὸν ποθεν ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἀπηγγείλε μοι;** “And I asked him whence he was, and his name, but he did not tell me.” This is also the reading of the Codex Alexandrinus; but the Septuagint, in the London Polyglot, together with the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, read the negative particle with the Hebrew text, I asked NOT his name, etc.

**Verse 9. *The angel of God came again*** This second appearance of the angel was probably essential to the peace of Manoah, who might have been jealous of his wife had he not had this proof that the thing was of the Lord.

**Verse 15. *Until we shall have made ready a kid*** Not knowing his quality, Manoah wished to do this as an act of hospitality.

**Verse 16. *I will not eat of thy bread*** As I am a spiritual being, I subsist not by earthly food.

***And if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering*** Neither shall I receive that homage which belongs to God; thou must therefore offer thy burnt-offering to Jehovah.

**Verse 18. *Seeing it is secret?*** It was because it was secret that they wished to know it. The angel does not say that it was secret, but **פלאי** **והוה** hu peli it is WONDERFUL; the very character that is given to Jesus Christ, Isaiah 9:6: His name shall be called, **פלא** Wonderful; and it is

supposed by some that the angel gives this as his name, and consequently that he was our blessed Lord.

**Verse 19. *The angel did wondrously*** He acted according to his name; he, being wonderful, performed wonderful things; probably causing fire to arise out of the rock and consume the sacrifice, and then ascending in the flame.

**Verse 22. *We shall surely die, because we have seen God.*** See the note on Judges 6:22.

**Verse 23. *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, etc.*** This is excellent reasoning, and may be of great use to every truly religious mind, in cloudy and dark dispensations of Divine Providence. It is not likely that God, who has preserved thee so long, borne with thee so long, and fed and supported thee all thy life long, girding thee when thou knewest him not, is less willing to save and provide for thee and thine now than he was when, probably, thou trustedst less in him. He who freely gave his Son to redeem thee, can never be indifferent to thy welfare; and if he give thee power to pray to and trust in him, is it at all likely that he is now seeking an occasion against thee, in order to destroy thee? Add to this the very light that shows thee thy wretchedness, ingratitude, and disobedience, is in itself a proof that he is waiting to be gracious to thee; and the penitential pangs thou feelest, and thy bitter regret for thy unfaithfulness, argue that the light and fire are of God's own kindling, and are sent to direct and refine, not to drive thee out of the way and destroy thee. Nor would he have told thee such things of his love, mercy, and kindness, and unwillingness to destroy sinners, as he has told thee in his sacred word, if he had been determined not to extend his mercy to thee.

**Verse 24. *And called his name Samson*** The original שמשן shimshon, which is from the root שמש shamash, to serve, (whence shemesh, the sun,) probably means either a little sun, or a little servant; and this latter is so likely a name to be imposed on an only son, by maternal fondness, that it leaves but little doubt of the propriety of the etymology.

***And the Lord blessed him.*** Gave evident proofs that the child was under the peculiar protection of the Most High; causing him to increase daily in stature and extraordinary strength.

**Verse 25. *The Spirit of the Lord began to move him*** He felt the degrading bondage of his countrymen, and a strong desire to accomplish something for their deliverance. These feelings and motions he had from the Divine Spirit.

***Camp of Dan*** Probably the place where his parents dwelt; for they were Danites, and the place is supposed to have its name from its being the spot where the Danites stopped when they sent some men of their company to rob Micah of his teraphim, etc. See Judges 18:13-20. As he had these influences between Zorah and Eshtaol, it is evident that this was while he dwelt at home with his parents; for Zorah was the place where his father dwelt; see Judges 13:2. Thus God began, from his infancy, to qualify him for the work to which he had called him.

## CHAPTER 14

*Samson marries a wife of the Philistines, 1-4. Slays a young lion at Timnath, in the carcass of which he afterwards finds a swarm of bees, 5-9. He makes a feast; they appoint him thirty companions, to whom he puts forth a riddle, which they cannot expound, 10-14. They entice his wife to get the interpretation from him; she succeeds, informs them, and they tell the explanation, 15-18. He is incensed, and slays thirty of the Philistines, 19, 20.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 1. *Went down to Timnath*** A frontier town of the Philistines, at the beginning of the lands belonging to the tribe of Judah, Joshua 15:57; but afterwards given up to Dan, Joshua 19:43. David took this place from the Philistines, but they again got possession of it in the reign of Ahaz, 2 Chronicles 28:18.

**Verse 3. *Is there never a woman*** To marry with any that did not belong to the Israelitish stock, was contrary to the law, Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3. But this marriage of Samson was said to be of the Lord, Judges 14:4; that is, God permitted it, (for in no other sense can we understand the phrase,) that it might be a means of bringing about the deliverance of Israel.

***For she pleaseth me well.*** כִּי הִיא יִשְׁרָה בְּעֵינַי ki hi yisherah beeynai, for she is right in my eyes. This is what is supposed to be a sufficient reason to justify either man or woman in their random choice of wife or husband; the maxim is the same with that of the poet: —

*“Thou hast no fault, or I no fault can spy;  
Thou art all beauty or all blindness I.”*

When the will has sufficient power, its determinations are its own rule of right. That will should be pure and well directed that says, It shall be so, because I WILL it should be so. A reason of this kind is similar to that which I have seen in a motto on the brass ordnance of Lewis XIV., ULTIMA RATIO REGUM, the sum of regal logic; i.e., “My will, backed by these

instruments of destruction, shall be the rule of right and wrong." The rules and principles of this logic are now suspected; and it is not likely to be generally received again without violent demonstration.

**Verse 5. *A young lion roared against him.*** Came fiercely out upon him, ready to tear him to pieces.

**Verse 6. *He rent him as he would have rent a kid*** Now it is not intimated that he did this by his own natural strength, but by the Spirit of the Lord coming mightily upon him: so that his strength does not appear to be his own, nor to be at his command; his might was, by the will of God, attached to his hair and to his Nazarate.

**Verse 7. *And talked with the woman*** That is, concerning marriage; thus forming the espousals.

**Verse 8. *After a time*** Probably about one year; as this was the time that generally elapsed between espousing and wedding.

***A swarm of bees and honey in the carcass*** By length of time the flesh had been entirely consumed off the bones, and a swarm of bees had formed their combs within the region of the thorax, nor was it an improper place; nor was the thing unfrequent, if we may credit ancient writers; the carcasses of slain beasts becoming a receptacle for wild bees. The beautiful episode in the 4th Georgic of Virgil, beginning at ver. 317, proves that the ancients believed that bees might be engendered in the body of a dead ox:

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*Pastor Aristaeus fugiens Peneia Tempe —  
 Quatuor eximios praestanti corpore tauros  
 Ducit, et intacta totidem cervice juvencas.  
 Post, ubi nona suos Aurora induxerat ortus.  
 Inferias Orphei mittit, lucumque revisit.  
 Hic ver o subitum, ac dietu mirabile monstrum  
 Adspiciunt, liquefacta bourn per viscera toto  
 Stridere apes utero, et ruptis effervere costis;  
 Immensasque trahi nubes, jamque arbore summa  
 Confluere, et lentis uvam demittere ramis.*

*“Sad Aristaeus from fair Tempe fled,  
His bees with famine or diseases dead —  
Four altars raises, from his herd he culls  
For slaughter four the fairest of his bulls;*

*Four heifers from his female store he took,  
All fair, and all unknowing of the yoke.  
Nine mornings thence, with sacrifice and prayers,  
The powers atoned, he to the grove repairs.*

*Behold a prodigy! for, from within  
The broken bowels, and the bloated skin,  
A buzzing noise of bees his ears alarms,*

**Thirty sheets** I have no doubt that the Arab hayk, or hake, is here meant; a dress in which the natives of the East wrap themselves, as a Scottish Highlander does in his plaid. In Asiatic countries the dress scarcely ever changes; being nearly the same now that it was 2000 years ago. Mr. Jackson, in his account of the Empire of Morocco, thus mentions the Moorish dress: “It resembles,” says he, “that of the ancient patriarchs, as represented in paintings; (but the paintings are taken from Asiatic models;) that of the men consists of a red cap and turban, a (kumja) shirt, which hangs outside of the drawers, and comes down below the knee; a (caftan) coat, which buttons close before, and down to the bottom, with large open sleeves; over which, when they go out of doors, they throw carelessly, and sometimes elegantly, a hayk, or garment of white cotton, silk, or wool, five or six yards long, and five feet wide. The Arabs often dispense with the caftan, and even with the shirt, wearing nothing but the hayk.” When an Arab does not choose to wrap himself in the hayk, he throws it over his left shoulder, where it hangs till the weather, etc., obliges him to wrap it round him. The hayk is either mean or elegant, according to the quality of the cloth, and of the person who wears it. I have myself seen the natives of Fez, with hayks, or hykes, both elegant and costly. By the changes of garments, it is very likely that the kumja and caftan are meant, or at least the caftan; but most likely both: for the Hebrew has חליפות בגדים chaliphoth begadim, changes or succession of garments. Samson, therefore, engaged to give or receive thirty hayks, and thirty kumjas and caftans, on the issue of the interpretation or non-interpretation of his riddle: these were complete suits.

**Verse 14. And he said unto there**



what were called **γριφοι**, griphoi, riddles, enigmas, or very obscure sayings, both curious and difficult, and to give a recompense to those who found them out, which generally consisted in either a festive crown, or a goblet full of wine. Those who failed to solve them were condemned to drink a large portion of fresh water, or of wine mingled with a sea-water, which they were compelled to take down at one draught, without drawing their breath, their hands being tied behind their backs. Sometimes they gave the crown to the deity in honor of whom the festival was made: and if none could solve the riddle, the reward was given to him who proposed it. Of these enigmas proposed at entertainments etc., we have numerous examples in **ATHENAEUS**, *Deipnosoph*, lib. x., c. 15, p. 142, edit. Argentorat., and some of them very like this of Samson for example: —

διδους τις ουκ εδωκεν, ουδ' εχων εχει;

*“Who gives, and does not give?  
Who has not, and yet has?”*

This may be spoken of an enigma and its proposer: he gives it, but he does not give the sense; the other has it, but has not the meaning.

εστι φυσικη θηλεια βρεφη σοζουσ' υπο κολποις  
αυτης ταυτα δ' αφωνα βοην ιστησι γεγωνον.  
και δια ποντιον οιδμα, και ηπειρου δια πασης,  
οις εθελει θνητων τοις δ' ου παρεουσις ακουειν  
εξεστι κωφην δ' ακοης αισθησιν εχουσιν.

“There is a feminine Nature, fostering her children in her bosom; who, although they are dumb, send forth a distinct voice over every nation of the earth, and every sea, to whom soever they please. It is possible for those who are absent to hear, and for those who are deaf to hear also.” The relator brings in Sappho interpreting it thus: —

θηλεια μεν ουν εστι φυσικη, επιστολη.  
βρεφη δ' εν αυτη περιφερει τα γραμματα  
αφωνα δ' οντα ταυτα τοις πορρω λαλει,  
οις βουλεθ' ετερος δ' αν τυχη τις πλησιον  
εστωσ αναγινωσκοντος, ουκ ακουσεται.

“The Nature, which is feminine, signifies an epistle; and her children whom she bears are alphabetical characters: and these, being dumb, speak and give counsel to any, even at a distance; though he who stands nigh to him who is silently reading, hears no voice.” Here is another, attributed by the same author to Theodectes: —

της φυσεως οσα γαια φερει τροφος, ουδ' οσα ποντος,  
ουτε βροτοισιν εχει γυιων αυξησιν ομοιαν.  
αλλ' εν μεν γενεσει πρωτοσπορω εστι μεγαστη,  
εν δε μεσαις ακμαις μικρα, γηρα δε προς αυτω  
μορφη και μεγεθει μειζων παλιν εστιν απαντων.

“Neither does the nourishing earth so bear by nature, nor the sea, nor is there among mortals a like increase of parts; for at the period of its birth it is greatest, but in its middle age it is small, and in its old age it is again greater in form and size than all.” This is spoken of a shadow. At the rising of the sun in the east, the shadow of an object is projected illimitably across the earth towards the west; at noon, if the sun be vertical to that place, the shadow of the object is entirely lost; at sunset, the shadow is projected towards the east, as it was in the morning towards the west. Here is another, from the same author: —

εισι κασιγνηται διτται, ων η μια τικτει  
την επεραν, αυτη δε τεκουσ' υπο τηςδε τεκνουται.

“There are two sisters, the one of whom begets the other, and she who is begotten produces her who begat her.”

Day and night solve this enigma. The following I have taken from Theognis: —

ηδη γαρ με κεκληκε θαλαττιος οικαδε νεκρος,  
τεθνηκως, ζω φθεγγομενος στοματι.

THEOGEN. Gnom., in fine.

*“A dead seaman calls me to his house;  
And, although he be dead, he speaks with a living  
mouth.”*

This dead seaman is a conch or large shellfish, of which the poet was about to eat. The mouth by which it spoke signifies its being used as a horn; as it is well known to produce, when opened at the spiral end and blown, a very powerful sound.

**Verse 17. *And she wept before him*** Not through any love to him, for it appears she had none, but to oblige her paramours; and of this he soon had ample proof.

**Verse 18. *If ye had not ploughed with my heifer*** If my wife had not been unfaithful to my bed, she would not have been unfaithful to my secret; and, you being her paramours, your interest was more precious to her than that of her husband. She has betrayed me through her attachment to you. Calmet has properly remarked, in quoting the Septuagint, that to plough with one's heifer, or to plough in another man's ground, are delicate turns of expression used both by the Greeks and Latins, as well as the Hebrews, to point out a wife's infidelities. Thus Theognis, Gnom. v. 581: —

εχθαιρω δε γυναικα περιδρομον, ανδρα τε μαργον.  
'ος την αλλονριην βουλευτ' αρουραν αρουν.

“I detest a woman who gads about, and also a libidinous man, who wishes to plough in another man's ground.”

*Fundum alienium arat, incultum familiarem deserit.*

*PLAUTUS.*

“He ploughs another's farm, and leaves his own heritage uncultivated.”

*Milo domi non est, perepre at Milone profecto  
Arva vacant, uxor non minus inde parit.*

*MARTIAL.*

“Milo is not at home, and Milo being from home, his field lies uncultivated; his wife, nevertheless, continues to breed, and brings forth children.” There is the same metaphor in the following lines of Virgil: —

*Hoc faciunt, nimo ne luxu obtusior usus,*

*Sit genitali arvo, sulcosque oblimet inertes.*

*Geor. l. iii., v. 135.*

In this sense Samson's words were understood by the Septuagint, by the Syriac, and by Rabbi Levi. See BOCHART, Hierozoic. p. 1., lib. ii., cap. 41., col. 406. The metaphor was a common one, and we need seek for no other interpretation of the words of Samson.

**Verse 19. *The Spirit of the Lord came upon him*** "The spirit of fortitude from before the Lord." -Targum. He was inspired with unusual courage, and he felt strength proportioned to his wishes.

***He-slew thirty men-and took their spoils*** He took their hayks, their kumjas, and caftans, and gave them to the thirty persons who, by unfair means, had solved his riddle; thus they had what our version calls thirty sheets, and thirty changes of raiment. See the note on Judges 14:12.

**Verse 20. *But Samson's wife was given to his companion*** This was the same kind of person who is called the friend of the bridegroom, John 3:29. And it is very likely that she loved this person better than she loved her husband, and went to him as soon as Samson had gone to his father's house at Zorah. She might, however, have thought herself abandoned by him, and therefore took another; this appears to have been the persuasion of her father, Judges 15:2. But her betraying his secret and his interests to his enemies was a full proof he was not very dear to her; though, to persuade him to the contrary, she shed many crocodile tears; see Judges 14:16. He could not keep his own secret, and he was fool enough to suppose that another would be more faithful to him than he was to himself. Multitudes complain of the treachery of friends betraying their secrets, etc., never considering that they themselves have been their first betrayers, in confiding to others what they pretend to wish should be a secret to the whole world! If a man never let his secret out of his own bosom, it is impossible that he should ever be betrayed.

## CHAPTER 15

*Samson, going to visit his wife, finds her bestowed on another, 1, 2. He is incensed, vows revenge, and burns the corn of the Philistines, 3-5. They burn Samson's wife and her father, 6. He is still incensed, makes a great slaughter among them, 7, 8. The Philistines gather together against Israel, and to appease them the men of Judah bind Samson, and deliver him into their hands, 9-13. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon him; he breaks his bonds, finds the jaw-bone of an ass, and therewith kills a thousand men, 14-16. He is sorely fatigued; and, being thirsty, God miraculously produces water from an opening of the ground in Lehi, and he is refreshed, 17-19. He judges Israel in the time of the Philistines twenty years, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1. *Visited his wife with a kid*** On her betraying him, he had, no doubt, left her in great disgust. After some time his affection appears to have returned; and, taking a kid, or perhaps a fawn, as a present, he goes to make reconciliation, and finds her given to his brideman; probably, the person to whom she betrayed his riddle.

**Verse 2. *Thou hadst utterly hated her*** As he was conscious she had given him great cause so to do.

***Her younger sister*** The father appears to have been perfectly sincere in this offer.

**Verse 4. *Went and caught three hundred foxes*** There has been much controversy concerning the meaning of the term שועלים *shualim*, some supposing it to mean foxes or jackals, and others handfuls or sheaves of corn. Much of the force of the objections against the common version will be diminished by the following considerations: — 1. Foxes, or jackals, are common and gregarious in that country. 2. It is not hinted that Samson collected them alone; he might have employed several hands in this work. 3. It is not said he collected them all in one day; he might have employed

several days, as well as many persons, to furnish him with these means of vengeance. 4. In other countries, where ferocious beasts were less numerous, great multitudes have been exhibited at once. Sylla, in a public show to the Roman citizens, exhibited one hundred lions; Caesar, four hundred, and Pompey, nearly six hundred. The Emperor Probus let loose in the theater, at one time, one thousand ostriches, one thousand stags, one thousand wild boars, one thousand does, and a countless multitude of other wild animals; at another time he exhibited one hundred leopards from Libya, one hundred from Syria, and three hundred bears. — See Flavius Vopiscus in the Life of Probus, cap. xix., beginning with *Dedit Romanis etiam voluptates*, etc. That foxes, or the creature called shual, abounded in Judea, is evident from their frequent mention in Scripture, and from several places bearing their name. 1. It appears they were so numerous that even their cubs ruined the vineyards; see Canticles: So 2:15: Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil our vines. Jeremiah complains that the foxes had occupied the mountains of Judea, Lamentations 5:18. They are mentioned as making incursions into enclosures, etc., Nehemiah 4:3. Ezekiel compares the numerous false prophets to these animals, Ezekiel 13:4. In Joshua 15:28 we find a place called Hazar Shual, “the court of the foxes:” and in Joshua 19:42 a place called Shaal-abbin, “the foxes;” no doubt from the number of those animals in that district. And mention is made of the land of Shual, or of the fox, 1 Samuel 13:17. The creature called shual is represented by travelers and naturalists who have been in Judea as an animal between a wolf and a fox. Hasselquist, who was on the spot, and saw many of them, calls it the little Eastern fox. They are frequent in the East, and often destroy infirm persons and children. Dr. Kennicott, however, objects to the common interpretation; and gives reasons, some of which are far from being destitute of weight. “The three hundred foxes,” says he, “caught by Samson, have been so frequently the subject of banter and ridicule, that we should consider whether the words may not admit a more rational interpretation: for, besides the improbability arising here from the number of these foxes, the use made of them is also very strange. If these animals were tied tail to tail, they would probably pull contrary ways, and consequently stand still; whereas a firebrand tied to the tail of each fox singly would have been far more likely to answer the purpose here intended. To obviate these difficulties it has been well remarked, that the word שועלים shualim, here translated foxes, signifies also handfuls,

Ezekiel 13:19, handfuls of barley; if we leave out that one letter וּ vau, which has been inserted or omitted elsewhere, almost at pleasure. No less than seven Hebrew MSS. want that letter here, and read שְׁעָלִים shealim. Admitting this version, we see that Samson took three hundred handfuls or sheaves of corn, and one hundred and fifty firebrands; that he turned the sheaves end to end, and put a firebrand between the two ends in the midst; and then, setting the brands on fire, sent the fire into the standing corn of the Philistines. The same word is now used twice in one chapter, (Ezekiel 13:4, 19;) in the former verse signifying foxes, in the latter handfuls: and in 1 Kings 20:10, where we render it handfuls, it is αλωπεξι, foxes, in the Greek version.” -Remarks on Select Passages. The reasoning of Dr. Kennicott in the first part of this criticism has already been answered; other parts shall be considered below. Though there are seven MSS., which agree in the reading contended for by Dr. Kennicott, yet all the versions are on the other side. I see no improbability in the common version.

**Turned tail to tail** Had he put a firebrand to each, which Dr. Kennicott thinks more reasonable, the creature, naturally terrified at fire, would have instantly taken to cover, and thus the design of Samson would have been frustrated. But, tying two of them together by their tails, they would frequently thwart each other in running, pull hither and thither, and thus make the greater devastation. Had he tied them all together, the confusion would have been so great that no execution could have been done.

**Verse 6. Burnt her and her father** This was probably done to appease Samson: as they saw he had been unjustly treated both by his wife and her father; therefore they destroyed them both, that they might cause his wrath to cease from them. And this indeed seems intimated in the following verse: And Samson said-Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you; that is, I am not yet satisfied: ye have done me great wrongs, I must have proportionate redress; then I shall rest satisfied.

**Verse 8. He smote them hip and thigh** This also is variously understood; but the general meaning seems plain; he appears to have had no kind of defensive weapon, therefore he was obliged to grapple with them, and, according to the custom of wrestlers, trip up their feet, and then bruise them to death. Some translate heaps upon heaps; others, he smote horsemen and footmen; others, he wounded them from their legs to their

thighs, etc., etc. See the different versions. Some think in their running away from him he kicked them down, and then trod them to death: thus his leg or thigh was against their hip; hence the expression.

***The top of the rock Etam.*** It is very likely that this is the same place as that mentioned 1 Chronicles 4:32; it was in the tribe of Simeon, and on the borders of Dan, and probably a fortified place.

**Verse 10. *To bind Samson are we come up*** It seems they did not wish to come to an open rupture with the Israelites, provided they would deliver up him who was the cause of their disasters.

**Verse 11. *Three thousand men of Judah went*** It appears evidently from this that Samson was strongly posted, and they thought that no less than three thousand men were necessary to reduce him.

**Verse 12. *That ye will not fall upon me yourselves.*** He could not bear the thought of contending with and slaying his own countrymen; for there is no doubt that he could have as easily rescued himself from their hands as from those of the Philistines.

**Verse 13. *They bound him with two new cords*** Probably his hands with one and his legs with the other.

**Verse 14. *When he came unto Lehi*** This was the name of the place to which they brought him, either to put him to death, or keep him in perpetual confinement.

***Shouted against him*** His capture was a matter of public rejoicing.

**Verse 15. *He found a new jaw-bone of an ass*** I rather think that the word **טרייה** *teriyah*, which we translate new, and the margin moist, should be understood as signifying the tabia or putrid state of the ass from which this jawbone was taken. He found there a dead ass in a state of putrefaction; on which account he could the more easily separate the jaw from its integuments; this was a circumstance proper to be recorded by the historian, and a mark of the providence of God. But were we to understand it of a fresh jaw-bone, very lately separated from the head of an ass, the circumstance does not seem worthy of being recorded.



**With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps** I cannot see the propriety of this rendering of the Hebrew words **חמרתים בלחי החמור חמור** bilchi hachamor, chemor chamorathayim; I believe they should be translated thus: —

*“With the jaw-bone of this ass, an ass (the foal) of two asses;  
“With the jaw-bone of this ass I have slain a thousand men.”*

This appears to have been a triumphal song on the occasion; and the words are variously rendered both by the versions, and by expositors.

**Verse 17. Ramath-lehi.** The lifting up or casting away of the jaw-bone. Lehi was the name of the place before, Ramath was now added to it here; he lifted up the jaw-bone against his enemies, and slew them.

**Verse 18. I die for thirst** The natural consequence of the excessive fatigue he had gone through in this encounter.

**Verse 19. God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw** **אשר בלחי** asher ballechi, that was in Lehi; that is, there was a hollow place in this Lehi, and God caused a fountain to spring up in it. Because the place was hollow it was capable of containing the water that rose up in it, and thus of becoming a well.

**En-hakkore** The well of the implorer; this name he gave to the spot where the water rose, in order to perpetuate the bounty of God in affording him this miraculous supply.

**Which is in Lehi unto this day.** Consequently not **IN** the jaw-bone of the ass, a most unfortunate rendering.

**Verse 20. He judged Israel-twenty years.** In the margin it is said, He seems to have judged southwest Israel during twenty years of their servitude of the Philistines, Judges 13:1. Instead of **עשרים שנה** esrim shanah, twenty years, the Jerusalem Talmud has **ארבעים שנה** arbaim shanah, forty years; but this reading is not acknowledged by any MS. or version. According to Calmet, the twenty years of the judicature of Samson began the eighteenth year of the subjection of Israel to the

Philistines; and these twenty years are included in the judicature of the high priest Eli. THE burning of the Philistines' corn by the means of foxes and firebrands is a very remarkable circumstance; and there is a story told by Ovid, in the 4th book of his *Fasti*, that bears a striking similitude to this; and is supposed by some learned men to allude to Samson and his foxes. The poet is at a loss to account for this custom, but brings in an old man of Carseoli, with what must have appeared to himself a very unsatisfactory solution. The passage begins as follows: —

*Tertia post Hyadas cum luxerit orta, remotas,  
Carcere partitos Circus habebit equos  
Cur igitur missae vinctis ardentia taedis  
Terga ferant vulpes, causa docenda mihi?*

*Vid. OVID, Fastor. lib. iv., ver. 679.*

The substance of the whole account, which is too long to be transcribed, is this: It was a custom in Rome, celebrated in the month of April to let loose a number of foxes in the circus, with lighted flambeaux on their backs; and the Roman people took pleasure in seeing these animals run about till roasted to death by the flames with which they were enveloped. The poet wishes to know what the origin of this custom was, and is thus informed by an old man of the city of Carseoli: “A frolicsome young lad, about ten years of age, found, near a thicket, a fox that had stolen away many fowls from the neighboring roosts. Having enveloped his body with hay and straw, he set it on fire, and let the fox loose. The animal, in order to avoid the flames, took to the standing corn which was then ready for the sickle; and the wind, driving the flames with double violence, the crops were everywhere consumed. Though this transaction is long since gone by, the commemoration of it still remains; for, by a law of this city, every fox that is taken is burnt to death. Thus the nation awards to the foxes the punishment of being burnt alive, for the destruction of the ripe corn formerly occasioned by one of these animals.” Both Serrarius and Bochart reject this origin of the custom given by Ovid; and insist that the custom took its rise from the burning of the Philistines' corn by Samson's foxes. The origin ascribed to the custom by the Carseolian they consider as too frivolous and unimportant to be commemorated by a national festival. The

time of the observation does not accord with the time of harvest about Rome and in Italy, but it perfectly accords with the time of harvest in Palestine, which was at least as early as April. Nor does the circumstance of the fox wrapped in hay and let loose, the hay being set on fire, bear any proper resemblance to the foxes let loose in the circus with burning brands on their backs. These learned men therefore conclude that it is much more natural to suppose that the Romans derived the custom from Judea, where probably the burning of the Philistines' corn might, for some time, have been annually commemorated. The whole account is certainly very singular, and has not a very satisfactory solution in the old man's tale, as related by the Roman poet. All public institutions have had their origin in facts; and if, through the lapse of time or loss of records, the original facts be lost, we may legitimately look for them in cases where there is so near a resemblance as in that above.

## CHAPTER 16

*Samson comes to Gaza; they lay wait for him; he rises by night, and carries away the city gates, 1-3. Falls in love with Delilah, 4. The lords of the Philistines promise her money if she will obtain from Samson the secret in which his strength lay, 5. By various artifices she at last obtains this; and communicates it to the Philistines, who seize and bind him, put out his eyes, and cause him to grind in the prison-house, 6-21. At a public festival to Dagon he is brought out to make sport; when, being weary, he requests to be placed between the two pillars which supported the roof of the house, on which three thousand men and women were stationed to see him make sport, 22-27. He prays to God to strengthen him, and pulls down the pillars; by which (the house falling) both himself, the lords of the Philistines, and a vast multitude of the people, are slain, 28-30. His relatives come and take away his body, and bury it, 31.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 1.** *Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there a harlot* The Chaldee, as in the former case, renders the clause thus: Samson saw there a woman, an inn-keeper. Perhaps the word זונה zonah is to be taken here in its double sense; one who keeps a house for the entertainment of travelers, and who also prostitutes her person. Gaza was situated near the Mediterranean Sea, and was one of the most southern cities of Palestine. It has been supposed by some to have derived its name from the treasures deposited there by Cambyses, king of the Persians; because they say Gaza, in Persian, signifies treasure; so Pomponius Mela and others. But it is more likely to be a Hebrew word, and that this city derived its name, אַזַּח azzah, from אַזַּז azaz, to be strong, it being a strong or well fortified place. The Hebrew אַ ain in this word is, by the Septuagint, the Arabic, and the Vulgate, rendered G; hence instead of azzah, with a strong guttural breathing, we have Gaza, a name by which this town could not be recognized by an ancient Hebrew.

**Verse 2. *They compassed him in*** They shut up all the avenues, secured the gates, and set persons in ambush near them, that they might attack him on his leaving the city early the next morning.

**Verse 3. *Took the doors of the gate*** Though Samson was a very strong man, yet we do not find that he was a giant; consequently we may conjecture that the gates of the city were not very large, as he took at once the doors, the two posts, and the bar, with him. The cities of those days would appear to disadvantage among modern villages.

***A hill-before Hebron.***

formed out of osiers, hazel, etc. And in Ireland, very long and strong ropes are made of the fibres of bog-wood, or the larger roots of the fir, which is often dug up in the bogs or mosses of that country. But the Septuagint, by translating the Hebrew יֶתָרִים לַחִים yetharim lachim by νευραϊς υγγραϊς, and the Vulgate by nerviceis funibus, understand these bonds to be cords made of the nerves of cattle, or perhaps rather out of raw hides, these also making an exceedingly strong cord. In some countries they take the skin of the horse, cut it lengthwise from the hide into thongs about two inches broad, and after having laid them in salt for some time, take them out for use. This practice is frequent in the country parts of Ireland; and both customs, the wooden cord, and that made of the raw or green hide, are among the most ancient perhaps in the world. Among the Irish peasantry this latter species of cord is called the tug and is chiefly used for agricultural purposes, particularly for drawing the plough and the harrow, instead of the iron chains used in other countries.

**Verse 9. *Men lying in wait*** They probably did not appear, as Samson immediately broke his bonds when this bad woman said, The Philistines be upon thee.

**Verse 11. *If they bind me fast with new ropes*** Samson wishes to keep up the opinion which the Philistines held; viz., that his mighty strength was the effect of some charm; and therefore he says, Seven green withs which had not been dried; new ropes that were never occupied; weave the seven locks of my hair with the web, etc.; the green withs, the new ropes, and

κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὑφάνεν ἐν τῷ διασμάτι, καὶ ἐπῆξε τὸ πασσαλὼ εἰς τὸν τοίχον; “If thou shalt weave the seven locks of my head with the web, and shalt fasten them with the pin in the wall, I shall become weak like other men: And so it was that, when he slept, Dalida took the seven locks of his head, and wove them with the web, and fastened it with the pin to the wall and said unto him,” etc. All the words printed here in italic, are wanting in the present Hebrew copies; but are preserved in the Septuagint, and are most obviously necessary to complete the sense; else Delilah appears to do something that she is not ordered to do, and to omit what she was commanded.

**Verse 16. *His soul was vexed unto death*** What a consummate fool was this strong man! Might he not have seen, from what already took place, that Delilah intended his ruin? After trifling with her, and lying thrice, he at last commits to her his fatal secret, and thus becomes a traitor to himself and to his God. Well may we adopt the sensible observation of Calmet on this passage: Lamentations foiblesse du caeur de Samson, dans torte cette histoire, est encore plus etonnante que la force de son corps; “The weakness of Samson’s heart in the whole of this history, is yet more astonishing than the strength of his body.”

**Verse 17. *If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me*** The miraculous strength of Samson must not be supposed to reside either in his hair or in his muscles, but in that relation in which he stood to God as a Nazarite, such a person being bound by a solemn vow to walk in a strict conformity to the laws of his Maker. It was a part of the Nazarite’s vow to permit no razor to pass on his head; and his long hair was the mark of his Nazirate, and of his vow to God. When Samson permitted his hair to be shorn off, he renounced and broke his Nazir vow; in consequence of which God abandoned him, and therefore we are told, in Judges 16:20, that the Lord was departed from him.

**Verse 19. *She began to affect him*** She had probably tied his hands slyly, while he was asleep, and after having cut off his hair, she began to insult him before she called the Philistines, to try whether he were really reduced to a state of weakness. Finding he could not disengage himself, she called the Philistines, and he, being alarmed, rose up, thinking he could exert himself as before, and shake himself, i.e., disengage himself from his bonds

and his enemies: but he wist not that the Lord was departed from him; for as Delilah had cut off his locks while he was asleep, he had not yet perceived that they were gone.

**Verse 21. *Put out his eyes*** Thus was the lust of the eye, in looking after and gazing on strange women, punished. As the Philistines did not know that his strength might not return, they put out his eyes, that he might never be able to plan any enterprise against them.

***He did grind in the prison-house.*** Before the invention of wind and water-mills, the grain was at first bruised between two stones, afterwards ground in hand-mills. This is practiced in China and in different parts of the East still; and women and slaves are the persons who are obliged to turn these mills. Such instruments were anciently used in this country, and called querns, from the Anglo-Saxon [A.S.] and [A.S.] cweorn and cwyrn, which has the signification of a mill; hence [A.S.] cweorn stan, a millstone: and as quern conveys the notion of grinding, hence [A.S.], cweorn teth, the dentes molares or grinders in the jaws of animals. This clause of the verse is thus translated in the Saxon Octateuch: [AS] “And the Philistines laid their fangs, (seized) him soon, and led him away to their burgh, (city,) and shut him up in prison, and made him grind at their hand-querne.” So late as half a century ago I have seen these querns or hand-mills in these kingdoms.

**Verse 22. *The hair of his head began to grow again*** And may we not suppose that, sensible of his sin and folly, he renewed his Nazir vow to the Lord, in consequence of which his supernatural strength was again restored?

**Verse 23. *Unto Dagon their god*** Diodorus Siculus describes their god thus: *το μεν προσωπον εχει γυναικος, το δ' αλλο σωμα παν ιχθους;* “It had the head of a woman, but all the rest of the body resembled a fish.” Dagon was called Dorceto among the heathens. Horace, in the following lines, especially in the third and fourth, seems to have in view the image of Dagon: —



*Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam  
Pingere si velit; et varias inducere plumas,  
Undique collatis Inembris; ut turpiter atrum  
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne;  
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici?*  
DE ART. POET., V. 1.

*“Suppose a painter to a human head  
Should join a horse’s neck; and wildly spread  
The various plumage of the feather’d kind  
O’er limbs of different beasts, absurdly join’d;*

*Or if he gave to view a beauteous maid,  
Above the waist with every charm array’d,  
Should a foul fish her lower parts infold,  
Would you not smile such pictures to behold?”*

FRANCIS.

**Verse 25. Call for Samson, that he may make us sport** What the sport was we cannot tell; probably it was an exhibition of his prodigious strength. This seems to be intimated by what is said, Judges 16:22, of the restoration of his hair; and the exertions he was obliged to make will account for the weariness which gave him the pretense to ask for leave to lean against the pillars. Some think he was brought out to be a laughing-stock, and that he was variously insulted by the Philistines; hence the version of the Septuagint: *καὶ ἐρραπιζόν αὐτον*, and they buffeted him. Josephus, Antiq. Jud. lib. v., cap. 8, s. 12, says: He was brought out, *ὡπως ἐνυβρισωσιν αὐτον παρὰ τον ποτον*, that they might insult him in their cups.

**Verse 27. Now the house was full of men** It was either the prison-house, house of assembly, or a temple of Dagon, raised on pillars, open on all sides, and flat-roofed, so that it could accommodate a multitude of people on the top.

**Verse 28. *Samson called unto the Lord*** It was in consequence of his faith in God that he should be strengthened to overthrow his enemies and the enemies of his country, that he is mentioned, Hebrews 11:32, among those who were remarkable for their faith.

**Verse 29. *The two middle pillars upon which the house stood*** Much learned labor has been lost on the attempt to prove that a building like this might stand on two pillars. But what need of this? There might have been as many pillars here as were in the temple of Diana at Ephesus, and yet the two center pillars be the key of the building; these being once pulled down, the whole house would necessarily fall.

**Verse 30. *So the dead which he slew*** We are informed that the house was full of men and women, with about three thousand of both sexes on the top; now as the whole house was pulled down, consequently the principal part of all these were slain; and among them we find there were the lords of the Philistines. The death of these, with so many of the inferior chiefs of the people, was such a crush to the Philistine ascendancy, that they troubled Israel no more for several years, and did not even attempt to hinder Samson's relatives from taking away and burying his dead body.

**Verse 31. *He judged Israel twenty years.*** It is difficult to ascertain the time of Samson's magistracy, and the extent of country over which he presided. His jurisdiction seems to have been very limited, and to have extended no farther than over those parts of the tribe of Dan contiguous to the land of the Philistines. This is what our margin intimates on Judges 15:20. Many suppose that he and Eli were contemporaries, Samson being rather an executor of the Divine justice upon the enemies of his people, than an administrator of the civil and religious laws of the Hebrews. Allowing Eli and Samson to have been contemporaries, this latter part might have been entirely committed to the care of Eli. 1. SAMSON does not appear to have left any posterity. His amours with the different women mentioned in the history were unproductive as to issue. Had he married according to the laws of his country, he would have been both a more useful and a more happy man, and not have come to a violent death. 2. We seldom find much mental energy dwelling in a body that in size and bulk greatly surpasses the ordinary pitch of man; and wherever there are great physical powers, we seldom find proportionate moral faculties. Samson

was a man of a little mind, a slave to his passions, and the wretched dupe of his mistresses. He was not a great though he was a strong man; and even his muscular force would have been lost, or spent in beating the air, had he not been frequently under the impulse of the Divine Spirit. He often got himself into broils and difficulties from which nothing but supernatural interposition could have saved him. His attacks upon the Philistines were never well planned, as he does not appear to have asked counsel from God; indeed, he seems to have consulted nothing but his own passions, particularly those of inordinate love and revenge; and the last effort of his extraordinary strength was, not to avenge his people for the oppressions which they had suffered under the Philistinian yoke, nor to avenge the quarrel of God's covenant against the enemies of his truth, but to be avenged of the Philistines for the loss of his two eyes. 3. Samson is a solemn proof how little corporeal prowess avails where judgment and prudence are wanting, and how dangerous all such gifts are in the hands of any man who has not his passions under proper discipline, and the fear of God continually before his eyes. 4. A parallel has been often drawn between Samson and our blessed Lord, of whom he has been supposed to be a most illustrious type. By a fruitful imagination, and the torture of words and facts, we may force resemblances everywhere; but that not one will naturally result from a cool comparison between Jesus Christ and Samson, is most demonstrable. A more exceptionable character is not to be found in the sacred oracles. It is no small dishonor to Christ to be thus compared. There is no resemblance in the qualities of Samson's mind, there is none in his moral conduct, that can entitle him even to the most distant comparison with the chaste, holy, benevolent, and immaculate Jesus. That man dishonors the law of unchangeable righteousness, who endeavors to make Samson a type of any thing or person that can be called holy, just, and pure. 5. Those who compare him to Hercules have been more successful. Indeed, the heathen god of strength appears to have been borrowed from the Israelitish judge; but if we regard what is called the choice of Hercules, his preference of virtue to pleasure, we shall find that the heathen is, morally speaking, vastly superior to the Jew. M. Deuteronomy Lavour, in his *Conference de la Fable avec l' Histoire Sainte*, vol. ii., p. 1, has traced the parallel between Hercules and Samson in the following manner: — "Hercules was figured by the poets as supernatural both in his birth and actions, and was therefore received by the people as a

god of the first order. They attributed to him the miracles wrought by several illustrious chiefs among the people of God, which they found described in the sacred oracles, more ancient than their most ancient accounts, or which they had learned by tradition, and their commerce with the Egyptians and Phoenicians, who were spread through various countries, but particularly in Greece. It is also to the time of these chiefs, and to the government of the Israelites by their judges, that the heroes and grand events of fable owe their origin; to which time, indeed, they are referred by the common consent of authors, sacred and profane. “Every ancient nation, which had writers who left monuments of their country’s glory, had a Hercules of its own, forged on the same plan. Varro reckons more than forty, and Cicero reckons six. (Book iii. Deuteronomy *Natura Deorum*.) “Herodotus, (book ii., entitled *Euterpe*,) only speaks of the Egyptian and Greek Hercules. Although a Greek himself, this father of history, as Cicero calls him, who lived the nearest of any of these writers to the period he describes, informs us that Greece had borrowed its Hercules from Egypt, and that Amphitryon his father, and Alcmena his mother, were both Egyptians; so that, notwithstanding the desire the Greeks had to make Hercules a native of their country, they could not conceal his origin, which was either Egyptian or Hebrew; for the Greeks and Phoenicians looked upon the Israelites, who were settled in Canaan or Phoenicia, as Egyptians, whose ancestors, after residing in Egypt some centuries, had certainly come from that country. “M. Jaquelot, in his ‘Treatise on the Existence of God,’ believes that the Tyrian Hercules, who was the most ancient, was no other than Joshua. But St. Augustine (*City of God*, book xviii., chap. 19.) has made it appear that it was after Samson (because of his prodigious and incomparable strength) that they forged their Hercules; first in Egypt, afterwards in Phoenicia, and lastly in Greece, each of whose writers has united in him all the miraculous actions of the others. In fact, it appears that Samson, judge of the Israelites from about A.M. 2867 to 2887, celebrated in the book of Judges, and mentioned by Josephus in his history, is the original and essential Hercules of fable: and although the poets have united these several particulars, drawn from Moses and Joshua, and have added their own inventions; yet the most capital and considerable belong to Samson, and are distinguished by characteristics so peculiar to him, as to render him easily discerned throughout the whole. “In Hebrew the name of Samson (שמשון) signifies

the sun, and in Syriac (*servitium vel ministerium ejus*) subjection to some one, servitude. Macrobius says that the name of Hercules signifies only the sun; for, he adds, in Greek Hercules means, it is glory of the air, or the light of the sun. The Greeks and Egyptians have exactly followed the Syriac signification by imposing on their Hercules, during the whole of his life, a subjection to Eurystheus in all his exploits, and who appointed him his famous enterprises. This necessity they attribute to fate and the law of his birth. Having spoken of his name, we will now examine the circumstances of his birth, as mentioned in the sacred writings, Judges, Judges 13:2-24, and in the History of the Jews, chap. x. "Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, had married a woman who was barren, which led them to pray earnestly that the Lord would bless them with an offspring. One day, this woman being alone, an angel appeared to her, and told her he was sent by God to inform her she should have a son of the most extraordinary strength, who was to raise the glory of their nation, and to humble their enemies. Upon the arrival of her husband, she imparted to him the message and discourse of the angel. Some time after this heavenly messenger showed himself to them both as they were in the house together, and ascended up to heaven in their sight, after having confirmed the promises made before to the woman, who soon after became pregnant, and was in due time delivered of Samson. "The singular birth of Hercules, in fable, is similar to the above account, with a trifling alteration taken from the ideas the poets entertained of their gods. Amphitryon, the most considerable person and the chief of the Thebans, had married Alcmena, whom he loved to distraction, but had not any children by her. Jupiter, desirous of making her the mother of Hercules, repaired to Alcmena one night, in the absence and under the figure of her husband. On Amphitryon's return, his wife said she had seen him before, on such a night mentioning the visit she had received. Amphitryon, transported with jealousy, and enraged with his wife, whatever good opinion he might entertain of her virtue, would neither be appeased nor consoled till Jupiter appeared to vindicate her conduct; and, in order to convince Amphitryon of his being a god, visibly ascended up to heaven, after informing him that he alone had visited Alcmena, assuring him of her virtue, and promising him a son, who was to be distinguished for his strength; whose glory was to confer honor on his race and family; who was to humble their enemies; and who, finally, was to be immortal. "The Spirit of God, with which Samson was from the very first

endowed, caused him, even in his youth, to effect prodigies of strength. He once met with a furious young lion which attacked him; Samson, then unarmed, immediately rent the lion in pieces, as if it had been a lamb; and, resolving to revenge himself upon the Philistines, who had grievously afflicted the children of Israel, he slew vast numbers of them at different times, weakened them excessively, and thus began to deliver Israel out of the hands of their enemies as the angel had predicted. “Fable, likewise, causes Hercules to perform exploits requiring prodigious strength; but, as its exaggerations are beyond all bounds, it attributes to him, while still an infant, the strangling enormous serpents which fell upon him in his cradle, and the first and most illustrious exploit of his youth was the defeat of a terrible lion in the Nemeaan forest, which he slew without the help of any weapon of defense: the skin of this lion he afterwards wore as a garment. He likewise formed and executed the design of delivering his country from the tyrannic oppression of the Myrmidons. We ought not to be surprised that fable, which disfigures so many events by transforming them to its fancy, has altered the other adventures of Samson; that it has added to them others of its own invention; that it attributes to him the actions of other chiefs and heroes, and ascribes some of the performances of Samson to other persons than Hercules; for this reason we find the account of the foxes Samson caught and tied by the tail preserved indeed, but transferred to another country. “Fable then borrows in favor of our hero, Hercules, the miracle which God wrought for Joshua, when he assisted the Gibeonites against the five kings of the Amorites, when the Lord cast down great stones upon them from heaven, so that more of those who fled from the Israelites perished by the hail than did by the sword. In imitation of this miracle, fable says (Pliny, book iii., chap. iv.; Pomponius Mela, Deuteronomy Situ Orbis, book 2:, chap. v.) that when Hercules was engaged in a combat with the Ligurians, Jupiter assisted him by sending him a shower of stones. The quantity of stones which are still to be seen on the plains of Crau (called by the ancients Campi Lapidei) in Provence, has occasioned the poets to consider this place as the theater of the above miracle. “The jaw-bone of the ass, rendered so famous from Samson having slain one thousand Philistines with it, has been changed into the celebrated club of Hercules with which he defeated giants, and slew the many enemies that opposed him. The similarity of the Greek words *κορρη* and *κορυνη* may have given rise to this alteration; *corre* signifying jaw, and *coronae*, a

mace or club. The change of one of these words for the other is not difficult, especially as it seemed more suitable to arm Hercules with a club than with the jaw-bone of an ass. But fable has, however, more clearly preserved the miracle of the spring of water that God produced in this bone, to preserve Samson from perishing with thirst, after the defeat of the Philistines; for it relates that when Hercules had slain the dragon that guarded the golden apples in the garden of the Hesperides, and he was in danger of perishing with thirst in the scorching deserts of Libya, the gods caused a fountain to issue from a rock he struck with his foot; Apol. book xxxvi. of Argonauts, ver. 1446. “The extraordinary strength of Samson was accompanied with a constant and surprising weakness, viz., his love for women. These two characteristics compose his history, and are equally conspicuous throughout the whole of his life: the latter however predominated; and after having frequently exposed him to great danger, at length completed his ruin. Fable has not omitted this characteristic weakness in its Hercules; in him this passion was excited by every woman that presented herself to his view; it led him to the performance of many base actions, and, after precipitating him into several dangers, at length put an end to his miserable existence. Samson, who well knew that his strength depended upon the preservation of his hair, was so imprudent as to impart this secret to Delilah, his mistress. This woman, whose sole design in importuning him was to betray him, cut his hair off while asleep, and delivered him, thus deprived of all his strength, into the hands of the Philistines, who took from him both his liberty and eyesight, and treated him as the vilest and most wretched of slaves. Tradition, which spoils and disfigures the ancient histories and those of distant countries, has transferred this adventure to Nisus, king of Megara, and his daughter Scylla. Megara was also the name of one of Hercules’ wives the daughter of Creon, king of Thebes. The name of Scylla is taken from the crime and impiety of the daughter of Nisus, from the Greek verb *συλαω*, *sulao*, which signifies to rob or strip with impiety. The destiny or welfare of Nisus depended on the preservation of a lock of purple hair which grew on his head. Scylla, having conceived an affection for Minos, who was at that time besieging the capital of her father’s kingdom, betrayed her parent, cut off this lock of purple hair while he was asleep, and delivered him into the hands of his enemy. Nisus lost both his senses and his life, and according to fable, was changed into a bird. — Ovid, Met., book viii. “But the most

remarkable and striking event In the history of Samson, is that by which he lost his life. The Philistines, when offering solemn sacrifices to their god, by way of thanksgiving for his having delivered into their hands their formidable enemy, caused Samson to be brought out of prison, in order to make a laughing-stock of him. Samson, as though wishing to rest himself, requested his conductors to let him lean against the pillars which supported the temple, which was at that time filled with a great multitude of persons, among whom were many princes of the Philistines. Samson then, invoking the Lord, and exerting all his strength, which was returning with the growth of his hair, laid hold of the pillars with both his hands, and shook them so violently as to pull the building down upon the whole multitude therein assembled. By this fatal catastrophe Samson killed a greater number of Philistines than he had done during his life. "Fable and tradition could not efface this event in the copy of Samson, which is Hercules. Herodotus relates it as a fabulous tradition, invented by the Greeks, and rejects it as having no foundation either in the history itself, or in the manners and customs of the Egyptians; among whom the Greeks say this event had happened. They relate (says this historian, book ii., entitled Euterpe, p. 47) that Hercules, having fallen into the hands of the Egyptians, was condemned to be sacrificed to Jupiter. He was adorned like a victim, and led with much pomp to the foot of the altar: after permitting himself to be conducted thus far, and stopping a moment to collect his strength, he fell upon and massacred all those who were assembled to be either actors in, or spectators of, this pompous sacrifice, to the number of many thousands. "The conformity between these adventures of Samson and Hercules is self-evident, and proves beyond a doubt that the fable of the one was composed from the history of the other. The remark of Herodotus respecting the impossibility of this last adventure, according to the Greek tradition, and the folly of attributing it to the Egyptians, serves to confirm the truth of its having been borrowed, and of its being but a disfigured copy, whose original must be sought for elsewhere. "In fact, it appears that Samson, judge of the Israelites, particularly mentioned in the book of Judges, and by Josephus, Ant. lib. v., c. 10, is the original and essential Hercules of fable; and although the poets have united some particulars drawn from Moses and Joshua, and have added their own inventions, yet the most capital and considerable belong to Samson, and are distinguished by characteristics so peculiar to him, as render him easily



discernible throughout the whole.” The above is the substance of what M. Deuteronomy Lavour has written on the subject, and contains, as some think, a very clear case; and is an additional proof how much the heathens have been indebted to the Bible.

## CHAPTER 17

*Micah, an Ephraimite, restores to his mother eleven hundred shekels of silver, which he had taken from her, 1, 2. She dedicates this to God; and out of a part of it makes a graven image and a molten image, and gets them up in the house of Micah, 3, 4; who consecrates one of his sons to be his priest, 5. He afterwards finds a Levite, whom he consecrates for a priest, and gives him annually ten shekels of silver, with his food and clothing, 6-13.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 1. *And there was a man of Mount Ephraim*** It is extremely difficult to fix the chronology of this and the following transactions. Some think them to be here in their natural order; others, that they happened in the time of Joshua, or immediately after the ancients who outlived Joshua. All that can be said with certainty is this, that they happened when there was no king in Israel; i.e., about the time of the Judges, or in some time of the anarchy, Judges 17:6.

**Verse 2. *About which thou cursedst*** Houbigant and others understand this of putting the young man to his oath. It is likely that when the mother of Micah missed the money, she poured imprecations on the thief; and that Micah, who had secreted it, hearing this, was alarmed, and restored the money lest the curses should fall on him.

**Verse 3. *I had wholly dedicated*** From this it appears that Micah's mother, though she made a superstitious use of the money, had no idolatrous design, for she expressly says she had dedicated it ליהוה layhovah, to Jehovah; and this appears to have been the reason why she poured imprecations on him who had taken it.

**Verse 4. *A graven image and a molten image*** What these images were, we cannot positively say; they were most probably some resemblance of matters belonging to the tabernacle. See below.

**Verse 5. *The man Micah had a house of gods*** בית אלהים beith Elohim should, I think, be translated house or temple of God; for it is very likely that both the mother and the son intended no more than a private or domestic chapel, in which they proposed to set up the worship of the true God.

***Made an ephod*** Perhaps the whole of this case may be stated thus: Micah built a house of God—a chapel in imitation of the sanctuary; he made a graven image representing the ark, a molten image to represent the mercy-seat, teraphim to represent the cherubim above the mercy-seat, and an ephod in imitation of the sacerdotal garments; and he consecrated one of his sons to be priest. Thus gross idolatry was not the crime of Micah; he only set up in his own house an epitome of the Divine worship as performed at Shiloh. What the teraphim were, see the note on Genesis 31:19; for the ephod, see the note on Exodus 25:7; and for the sacerdotal vestments in general, see the note on Exodus 28:4, etc.

***Who became his priest.*** כהן cohen, which the Targum translates chumera. The word כהן cohen is the common name in Hebrew for a priest of the true God; but sometimes it is applied to idolatrous priests. When it is to be understood in the former sense, the Targum renders it cahen; when in the latter, it uses the word כומרא chumera, by which it always understands an idolatrous priest. But that this was not a case of idolatry, and that the true God was worshipped here, is evident from the word Jehovah being used, Judges 17:4, and oracular answers being given at this house, as we see from Judges 18:6 etc.

**Verse 6. *There was no king in Israel*** The word מלך melech, which generally means king, is sometimes taken for a supreme governor, judge, magistrate, or ruler of any kind; (see Genesis 36:31, and Deuteronomy 33:5;) and it is likely it should be so understood here.

***Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*** He was his own governor, and what he did he said was right; and, by his cunning and strength, defended his conduct. When a man's own will, passions, and caprice, are to be made the rule of law, society is in a most perilous and ruinous state. Civil government is of God; and without it the earth must soon be desolated. There was a time when there was no king in England;

and that was, in general, a time of scandal to religion, and oppression to men.

**Verse 7. *Of the family of Judah*** The word family may be taken here for tribe; or the young man might have been of the tribe of Judah by his mother, and of the tribe of Levi by his father, for he is called here a Levite; and it is probable that he might have officiated at Shiloh, in the Levitical office. A Levite might marry into any other tribe, providing the woman was not an heiress.

**Verse 8. *To sojourn where he could find*** He went about the country seeking for some employment, for the Levites had no inheritance: besides, no secure residence could be found where there was no civil government.

**Verse 10. *Be unto me a father and a priest*** Thou shalt be master of my house, as if thou wert my father; and, as priest, thou shalt appear in the presence of God for me. The term father is often used to express honor and reverence.

***Ten shekels of silver*** About thirty shillings per annum, with board, lodging, and clothes. Very good wages in those early times.

**Verse 11. *The Levite was content*** He thought the place a good one, and the wages respectable.

**Verse 12. *Micah consecrated the Levite*** וַיִּמַּלֵּא אֶת יָדוֹ vayemalle eth yad, he filled his hands, i.e., he gave him an offering to present before the Lord, that he might be accepted by him. He appointed him to be priest; God was to accept and consecrate him; and for this purpose he filled his hand; i.e., furnished him with the proper offering which he was to present on his inauguration.

**Verse 13. *Now know I that the Lord will do me good*** As he had already provided an epitome of the tabernacle, a model of the ark, mercy-seat, and cherubim; and had got proper sacerdotal vestments, and a Levite to officiate; he took for granted that all was right, and that he should now have the benediction of God. Some think that he expected great gain from the concourse of the people to his temple; but of this there is no evidence in the text. Micah appears to have been perfectly sincere in all that he did. I HAVE already remarked that there is no positive evidence that Micah or

his mother intended to establish any idolatrous worship. Though they acted without any Divine command in what they did; yet they appear, not only to have been perfectly sincere, but also perfectly disinterested. They put themselves to considerable expense to erect this place of worship, and to maintain, at their own proper charges, a priest to officiate there; and without this the place, in all probability, would have been destitute of the worship and knowledge of the true God. His sincerity, disinterestedness, and attachment to the worship of the God of his fathers, are farther seen in the joy which he expressed on finding a Levite who might legally officiate in his house. It is true, he had not a Divine warrant for what he did; but the state of the land, the profligacy of his countrymen, his distance from Shiloh, etc., considered, he appears to deserve more praise than blame, though of the latter he has received a most liberal share from every quarter. This proceeds from that often-noticed propensity in man to take every thing which concerns the character of another by the worst handle. It cannot be considered any particular crime, should these notes be found at any time leaning to the other side.

## CHAPTER 18

*Some Danites, seeking an inheritance, send five men to search the land, who arrive at the house of Micah, 1, 2. They employ the Levite, who served to his house as priest, to ask counsel for them of God, 3-5. He inquires, and promises them success, 6. They depart, and go to Laish, and find the inhabitants secure, 7. They return to their brethren, and encourage them to attempt the conquest of the place, 8-10. They send six hundred men, who, coming to the place where Micah dwelt, enter the house, and carry off the priest and his consecrated things, 11-21. Micah and his friends pursue them; but, being threatened, are obliged to return, 22-26. The Danites come to Laish, and smite it, and build a city there, which they call Dan, 27-29. They make the Levite their priest, and set up the images at this new city, 30, 31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1.** *There was no king in Israel* See Judges 17:6. The circumstances related here show that this must have happened about the time of the preceding transactions.

*The tribe of the Danites* That is, a part of this tribe; some families of it.

*All their inheritance* That is, they had not got an extent of country sufficient for them. Some families were still unprovided for, or had not sufficient territory; for we find from Joshua 19:40, etc., that, although the tribe of Dan did receive their inheritance with the rest of the tribes of Israel, yet their coasts went out too little for them, and they went and fought against LESHEM, (called here Laish,) and took it, etc. This circumstance is marked here more particularly than in the book of Joshua. See on Joshua 19:47.

**Verse 2.** *Five men-men of valor* The Hebrew word חַיִל *chayil* has been applied to personal prowess, to mental energy, and to earthly possessions. They sent those in whose courage, judgment, and prudence, they could safely confide.

**Verse 3. *They knew the voice of the young man*** They knew, by his dialect or mode of pronunciation, that he was not an Ephraimite. We have already seen (Judges 12:6) that the Ephraimites could not pronounce certain letters. See the note there.

**Verse 5. *Ask counsel-of God*** As the Danites use the word אלהים Elohim here for God, we are necessarily led to believe that they meant the true God; especially as the Levite answers, Judges 18:6, Before the LORD (יהוה Yehovah) is your way. Though the former word may be sometimes applied to idols, whom their votaries clothed with the attributes of God; yet the latter is never applied but to the true God alone. As the Danites succeeded according to the oracle delivered by the Levite, it is a strong presumption that the worship established by Micah was not of an idolatrous kind. It is really begging the question to assert, as many commentators have done, that the answer was either a trick of the Levite, or suggested by the devil; and that the success of the Danites was merely accidental. This is taking the thing by the worst handle, to support an hypothesis, and to serve a system. See the end of the preceding chapter. {Judges 17:13}

**Verse 7. *After the manner of the Zidonians*** Probably the people of Laish or Leshem were originally a colony of the Sidonians, who, it appears, were an opulent people; and, being in possession of a strong city, lived in a state of security, not being afraid of their neighbors. In this the Leshemites imitated them, though the sequel proves they had not the same reason for their confidence.

***They were far from the Zidonians*** Being, as above supposed, a Sidonian colony, they might naturally expect help from their countrymen; but, as they dwelt a considerable distance from Sidon, the Danites saw that they could strike the blow before the news of invasion could reach Sidon; and, consequently, before the people of Laish could receive any succours from that city.

***And had no business with any man.*** In the most correct copies of the Septuagint, this clause is thus translated: και λογος ουκ ην αυτοις μετα συριας; and they had no transactions with SYRIA. Now it is most evident that, instead of אדם adam, MAN, they read ארם aram, SYRIA;

words which are so nearly similar that the difference which exists is only between the **resh** and **daleth**, and this, both in MSS. and printed books, is often indiscernible. This reading is found in the Codex Alexandrinus, in the Complutensian Polyglot, in the Spanish Polyglot, and in the edition of the Septuagint published by Aldus. It may be proper to observe, that Laish was on the frontiers of Syria; but as they had no intercourse with the Syrians, from whom they might have received the promptest assistance, this was an additional reason why the Danites might expect success.

**Verse 9. *Arise, etc.*** This is a very plain and nervous address; full of good sense, and well adapted to the purpose. It seems to have produced an instantaneous effect.

**Verse 11. *Six hundred men*** These were not the whole, for we find they had children, etc., Judges 18:21; but these appear to have been six hundred armed men.

**Verse 12. *Mahaneh-dan*** “The camp of Dan;” so called from the circumstance of this armament encamping there. See Judges 13:25, which affords some proof that this transaction was previous to the days of Samson.

**Verse 14. *Consider what ye have to do.*** They probably had formed the design to carry off the priest and his sacred utensils.

**Verse 18. *These went unto Micah’s house*** The five men went in, while the six hundred armed men stood at the gate.



**And the carriage** כבודהּ kebudah, their substance, precious things, or valuables; omne quod erat pretiosum, VULGATE: or rather the luggage or baggage; what Caesar calls in his commentaries impedimenta; and what the Septuagint here translate βαρος, weight or baggage. We are not to suppose that any wheel carriage is meant.

**Verse 24. *Ye have taken away my gods*** As Micah was a worshipper of the true God, as we have seen, he cannot mean any kind of idols by the word אלהיּ elohai here used. He undoubtedly means those representations of Divine things, and symbols of the Divine presence such as the teraphim, ephod, etc.; for they are all evidently included under the word elohai, which we translate my gods.

**Verse 25. *And thou lose thy life*** This was argumentum ad hominem; he must put up with the loss of his substance, or else lose his life! It was the mere language of a modern highwayman: Your life or your money.

**Verse 27. *Unto a people-at quiet and secure*** They found the report given by the spies to be correct. The people were apprehensive of no danger, and were unprepared for resistance; hence they were all put to the sword, and their city burnt up.

**Verse 28. *There was no deliverer*** They had no succor, because the Sidonians, from whom they might have expected it, were at too great a distance.

**Verse 29. *Called the name of the city Dan*** This city was afterwards very remarkable as one of the extremities of the promised land. The extent of the Jewish territories was generally expressed by the phrase, From DAN to BEER-SHEBA; that is, From the most northern to the southern extremity.

**Verse 30. *The children of Dan set up the graven image*** They erected a chapel, or temple, among themselves, as Micah had done before; having the same implements and the same priest.

**And Jonathan the son of Gershom** Either this was the name of the young Levite; or they had turned him off, and got this Jonathan in his place.

**The son Manasseh** Who this Manasseh was, none can tell; nor does the reading appear to be genuine. He could not be Manasseh the son of

Joseph, for he had no son called Gershom nor could it be Manasseh king of Israel, for he lived eight hundred years afterwards. Instead of מְנַשֶּׁה Manasseh, the word should be read מֹשֶׁה Mosheh, MOSES, as it is found in some MSS., in the Vulgate, and in the concessions of the most intelligent Jews. The Jews, as R. D. Kimchi acknowledges, have suspended the letter: נ nun, over the word מֹשֶׁה, thus, מְנַשֶּׁה which, by the addition of the points, they have changed into MANASSEH, because they think it would be a great reproach to their legislator to have had a grandson who was an idolater. That Gershom the son of Moses is here intended, is very probable. See the arguments urged by Dr. Kennicott, Dissertation I., p. 55, etc.; and see the Var. Lect. of Deuteronomy Rossi on this place.

*Until the day of the captivity of the land.* Calmet observes, “The posterity of this Jonathan executed the office of priest in the city of Dan, all the time that the idol of Micah (the teraphim, ephod, etc.) was there. But this was only while the house of the Lord was at Shiloh; and, consequently, the sons of Jonathan were priests at Dan only till the time in which the ark was taken by the Philistines, which was the last year of Eli, the high priest; for after that the ark no more returned to Shiloh.” This is evident; and on this very ground Houbigant contends that, instead of הָאָרֶץ haarets, the LAND, we should read הָאֵרֶץ haaron, the ARK; for nothing is easier than the הּ vau and final nun to be mistaken for the ה final tsade, which is the only difference between the captivity of the LAND and the captivity of the ARK. And this conjecture is the more likely, because the next verse tells us that Micah’s graven image, etc., continued at Dan all the time that the house of God was at Shiloh; which was, till the ark was taken by the Philistines. Those who wish to see more on this subject may consult Calmet, and the writers in Pool’s Synopsis. This chapter is an important supplement to the conclusion of the 19th chapter of Joshua, on which it casts considerable light. THE Danites were properly the first dissenters from the public established worship of the Jews; but they seem to have departed as little as possible from the Jewish forms, their worship being conducted in the same way, but not in the same place. Surely it was better to have had this, allowing it to be unconstitutional worship, than to have been wholly destitute of the ordinances of God. I think we have not sufficient ground from the text to call these persons idolaters; I believe they worshipped the true God according to their light and circumstances,

from a conviction that they could not prosper without his approbation, and that they could not expect that approbation if they did not offer to him a religious worship. They endeavored to please him, though the means they adopted were not the most proper.

## CHAPTER 19

*A Levite and his concubine disagree; and she leaves him and goes to her father's house, 1, 2. He follows to bring her back, and is kindly entertained by her father five days, 3-8. He returns; and lodges the first night at Gibeah, in the tribe of Benjamin, 9-21. The men of Gibeah attack the house, and insist on abusing the body of the Levite; who, to save himself, delivers to them his concubine, whose life falls a victim to their brutality, 22-27. The Levite divides her dead body into twelve pieces, and sends one to each of the twelve tribes; they are struck with horror, and call a council on the subject, 28-30.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 1. *There was no king in Israel*** All sorts of disorders are attributed to the want of civil government; justice, right, truth, and humanity, had fallen in the streets.

***Took to him a concubine*** We have already seen that the concubine was a sort of secondary wife; and that such connections were not disreputable, being according to the general custom of those times. The word פִּלְגֶשֶׁת *pilegsh*, concubine, is supposed by Mr. Parkhurst to be compounded of פָּלַג *palag*, “to divide, or share;” and נָגַשׁ *nagash*, “to approach;” because the husband shared or divided his attention and affections between her and the real wife; from whom she differed in nothing material, except in her posterity not inheriting.

**Verse 2. *Played the whore*** Neither the Vulgate, Septuagint, Targum, nor Josephus, understand this word as implying any act of conjugal infidelity on the woman's part. They merely state that the parties disagreed, and the woman returned to her father's house. Indeed all the circumstances of the case vindicate this view of the subject. If she had been a whore, or adulteress, it is not very likely that her husband would have gone after her to speak friendly, literally, to speak to her heart, and entreat her to return. The Vulgate simply states, *quae reliquit eum*, that she left him; the

Septuagint, **ωργισθη αυτω**, that she was angry with him; the Targum **ובסרת עלוהי** ubserath alohi, that she despised him; Josephus, **αλλοτοιως ειχε**, that she was alienated, or separated herself, from him. Houbigant translates the clause: quae cum ab eo alienata esset, vel irata in eum esset, eum reliquit; “who when she was alienated from him, or angry with him, left him;” and he defends this version in his note. I think the true meaning to be among the above interpretations. They had contentions; she ceased to love him, her affections were alienated from him; and she left his house, and went home to her father.

**Verse 3. *He rejoiced to meet him.*** He hoped to be able completely to reconcile his daughter and her husband.

**Verse 8. *And they tarried until afternoon*** Merely that they might avoid the heat of the day, which would have been very inconvenient in travelling.

**Verse 9. *The day groweth to an end*** **חנות היום** chanoth haiyom, “the day is about to pitch its tent;” that is, it was near the time in which travelers ordinarily pitched their tents, to take up their lodging for the night.

**Verse 11. *When they were by Jebus*** This was Jerusalem, in which, though after the death of Joshua it appears to have been partly conquered by the tribe of Judah, yet the Jebusites kept the strong hold of Zion till the days of David, by whom they were finally expelled. See the note on Judges 1:8.

**Verse 15. *No man-took them into his house to lodging.*** There was probably no inn or house of public entertainment in this place, and therefore they could not have a lodging unless furnished by mere hospitality. To say that there were no inns in those primitive times, is not true; there were such places, though not very frequent. Joseph’s brethren found their money in their sacks when they loosed them at an inn, Genesis 42:27. The house of Rahab was an inn, Joshua 2:1. And the woman whose house Samson frequented at Gaza was a hostess, or one who kept a place of public entertainment.

**Verse 19. *There is both straw and provender for our asses.*** In the countries principally devoted to pasturage, there was no hay; but as they

raised some corn, they took great care of their straw, chopped it very small, and having mixed it with barley, beans, or the pounded kernels of dates, made it into balls, and fed their cattle with it. Straw, cut into what is called chaff, is not unfrequently used in England for the same purpose.

**Verse 20. *All thy wants lie upon me*** Here was genuine hospitality: “Keep your bread and wine for yourselves, and your straw and provender for your asses; you may need them before you finish your journey; I will supply all your wants for this night, therefore do not lodge in the street.”

**Verse 22. *Sons of Belial*** Profligate fellows. See the notes on Deuteronomy 13:13.

***That we may know him.*** See Genesis 19:5. These were genuine sodomites as to their practice; sons of Belial, rascals and miscreants of the deepest dye; worse than brutes, being a compound of beast and devil inseparably blended.

**Verse 24. *Here is my daughter, a maiden*** Such a proposal was made by Lot to the men of Sodom, Genesis 19:8, but nothing can excuse either. That the rights of hospitality were sacred in the East, and most highly regarded we know; and that a man would defend, at the expense of his life, the stranger whom he had admitted under his roof, is true; but how a father could make such a proposal relative to his virgin daughter, must remain among those things which are incomprehensible.

**Verse 25. *So the man took his concubine*** The word **יָחַזֵק** yachazek, which we here translate simply took, signifies rather to take or seize by violence. The woman would not go out to them; but her graceless husband forced her to go, in order that he might save his own body. He could have but little love for her, and this was the cause of their separation before.

The men of Gibeah who wished to abuse the body of the Levite; the Levite who wished to save his body at the expense of the modesty, reputation, and life of his wife; and the old man who wished to save his guest at the expense of the violation of his daughter; are all characters that humanity and modesty wish to be buried in everlasting oblivion.

**When the day began to spring** Their turpitude could not bear the full light of the day; and they dismissed the poor woman when the day began to break.

**Verse 26. Fell down at the door** She had strength to reach the door, but not to knock for admittance: when she reached the door she fell down dead! The reason of this abominable and horrid catastrophe is strongly signified by the original words, Judges 19:25: וַיִּתְעַלְלוּ בָּהּ כָּל הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּדְעוּ אוֹתָהּ vaiyedu othah, vaiyithallelu bah col hallailah, which we modestly translate, and they knew her, and they abused her all the night. More literally, but still not fully: Illi cum ea rem habuerunt, et alternatim in eam tota nocte ascenderunt. The hithpahel used here in the verb עָלַל greatly increases the sense: Conjugatio hithpahel frequentiam actus et immanem libidinem designat. The Arabic is not too strong; the following is its meaning: Exercuerunt in ea cupiditates suas, et maechati, sunt in ea ad matutinum usque.

**Verse 29. Divided her-into twelve pieces** There is no doubt that with the pieces he sent to each tribe a circumstantial account of the barbarity of the men of Gibeah; and it is very likely that they considered each of the pieces as expressing an execration, “If ye will not come and avenge my wrongs, may ye be hewn in pieces like this abused and murdered woman!”

It was a custom among the ancient Highlanders in Scotland, when one clan wished to call all the rest to avenge its wrongs, to take a wooden cross, dip it in blood, and send it by a special messenger through all the clans. This was called the fire cross, because at sight of it each clan lighted a fire or beacon, which gave notice to all the adjoining clans that a general rising was immediately to take place.

**Verse 30. There was no such deed done nor seen** They were all struck with the enormity of the crime; and considered it a sovereign disgrace to all the tribes of Israel.

**Consider of it** Literally, Put it to yourselves; take counsel upon it; and speak. This was the prelude to the council held, and the subsequent operations, which are mentioned in the following chapter.

I HAVE passed over the abominable transactions of this chapter as lightly as I could, and shall make no apology to the learned or unlearned reader for leaving some things untranslated.

What a blessing are wholesome laws, and a vigorous and attentive magistracy! These wretched people had no form of government, and every one did what was right in his own eyes: their own eye (corrupt inclination) was the measure and rule of their conduct; and how bad a rule, the abuse and murder of the Levite's wife testify. Reader, bless God for a civil government.



## CHAPTER 20

*The heads of the eleven tribes come before the Lord in Mizpeh, and examine the Levite relative to the murder of his wife, who gives a simple narrative of the whole affair, 1-7. They unanimously resolve to avenge the wrong, and make provision for a campaign against the Benjamites, 8-11. They desire the Benjamites to deliver up the murderers; they refuse, and prepare for battle, having assembled an army of twenty-six thousand seven hundred men, 12-16. The rest of the Israelites amount to four hundred thousand, who, taking counsel of God, agree to send the tribe of Judah against the Benjamites, 17, 18. They attack the Benjamites, and are routed with the loss of twenty-two thousand men, 19-21. They renew the battle next day, and are discomfited with the loss of eighteen thousand men, 22-25. They weep, fast, and pray, and offer sacrifices; and again inquire of the Lord, who promises to deliver Benjamin into their hands, 26-28. They concert plans, attack the Benjamites, and rout them, killing twenty-five thousand one hundred men, and destroy the city of Gibeah, 29-37. A recapitulation of the different actions in which they were killed, 38-46. Six hundred men escape to the rock Rimmon, 47. The Israelites destroy all the cities of the Benjamites, 48.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 1. *Unto the Lord in Mizpeh.*** This city was situated on the confines of Judah and Benjamin, and is sometimes attributed to the one, sometimes to the other. It seems that there was a place here in which the Lord was consulted, as well as at Shiloh; in 1Mac 3:46, we read, In Maspha was the place where they prayed aforetime in Israel. These two passages cast light on each other.

Some think that Shiloh is meant, because the ark was there; but the phrase before the Lord may signify no more than meeting in the name of God to consult him, and make prayer and supplication. Wherever God's people are, there is God himself; and it ever was true, that wherever two or three were assembled in his name, he was in the midst of them.

**Verse 2. *The chief of all the people*** The corners פִּנּוֹת pinnoth; for as the corner-stones are the strength of the walls, so are the chiefs the strength of the people. Hence Christ is called the chief corner-stone.

***In the assembly of the people of God*** The Septuagint translate, And all the tribes of Israel stood up before the face of the Lord, εν εκκλησια του λαου του θεου, in the Church of the people of God. Here was a Church, though there was no priest; for, as Tertullian says, Ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici; “Wheresoever three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, there is a Church, although there be none but the laity.”

**Verse 3. *Tell us, how was this wickedness?*** They had heard before, by the messengers he sent with the fragments of his wife’s body; but they wish to hear it, in full council, from himself.

**Verse 8. *We will not any of us go to his tent*** We will have satisfaction for this wickedness before we return home.

**Verse 10. *Ten men of a hundred*** Expecting that they might have a long contest, they provide suttlers for the camp; and it is probable that they chose these tenths by lot.

**Verse 13. *Deliver us the men*** Nothing could be fairer than this. They wish only to make the murderers answerable for their guilt.

***Benjamin would not hearken*** Thus making their whole tribe partakers of the guilt of the men of Gibeah. By not delivering up those bad men, they in effect said: “We will stand by them in what they have done, and would have acted the same part had we been present.” This proves that the whole tribe was excessively depraved.

**Verse 15. *Twenty and six thousand*** Some copies of the Septuagint have twenty-three thousand, others twenty-five thousand. The Vulgate has this latter number; the Complutensian Polyglot and Josephus have the same.

**Verse 16. *Left-handed*** They were ambidexters-could use the right hand and the left with equal ease and effect. See the note on Judges 3:15.

***Could sling stones at a hair-and not miss*** וְלֹא יִחַטֵּא velo yachati, and not sin: και ουκ εξαμαρτανοντες; Sept. Here we have the true import of the term sin; it signifies simply to miss the mark, and is well translated in

the New Testament by **αμαρτανω**, from **α**, negative, and **μαρπτω**, to hit the mark. Men miss the mark of true happiness in aiming at sensual gratifications; which happiness is to be found only in the possession and enjoyment of the favor of God, from whom their passions continually lead them. He alone hits the mark, and ceases from sin, who attains to God through Christ Jesus.

It is worthy of remark that the Persian (Persian) *khuta kerdn*, which literally signifies to sin or mistake, is used by the Mohammedans to express to miss the mark.

The sling was a very ancient warlike instrument, and, in the hands of those who were skilled in the use of it, it produced astonishing effects. The inhabitants of the isles called *Baleares*, now Majorca and Minorca, were the most celebrated slingers of antiquity. They did not permit their children to break their fast till they had struck down the bread they were to eat from the top of a pole, or some distant eminence. They had their name *Baleares* from the Greek word **βαλλειν** to dart, cast, or throw.

Concerning the velocity of the ball out of the sling, there are strange and almost incredible things told by the ancients. The leaden ball, when thus projected, is said to have melted in its course. So OVID, *Met. lib. ii. ver. 726.*

*Obstupuit forma Jove natus: et aethere pendens  
Non secus exarsit, quam cum balearica plumbum  
Funda jacit; volat illud, et incandescit eundo;  
Et, quos non habuit, sub nubibus invenit ignes.*

*Hermes was fired as in the clouds he hung;  
So the cold bullet that, with fury slung  
From Balearic engines, mounts on high,  
Glows in the whirl, and burns along the sky.*

DRYDEN.

This is not a poetic fiction; SENECA, the philosopher, in *lib. iii. Quaest. Natural.*, c. 57, says the same thing: *Sic liquescit excussa glans funda, et adritu aeris velut igne distillat*; “Thus the ball projected from the sling melts, and is liquefied by the friction of the air, as if it were exposed to the action of fire.” I have often, by the sudden and violent compression of the air, produced fire; and by this alone inflamed tinder, and lighted a match.

Vegetius de Revelation Militari, lib. ii., cap. 23, tells us that slingers could in general hit the mark at six hundred feet distance. Funditores scopas-pro signo ponebant; ita ut SEXCENTOS PEDES removerentur a signo-signum saepius tangerent. These things render credible what is spoken here of the Benjamite slingers.

**Verse 18. *Went up to the house of God*** Some think that a deputation was sent from Shiloh, where Phinehas the high priest was, to inquire, not concerning the expediency of the war, nor of its success, but which of the tribes should begin the attack. Having so much right on their side, they had no doubt of the justice of their cause. Having such a superiority of numbers, they had no doubt of success. See the note on Judges 20:1.

***And the Lord said, Judah*** But he did not say that they should conquer.

**Verse 21. *Destroyed down to the ground—twenty-two thousand men.*** That is, so many were left dead on the field of battle.

**Verse 23. *Go up against him.*** It appears most evident that the Israelites did not seek the protection of God. They trusted in the goodness of their cause and in the multitude of their army. God humbled them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, and showed them that the race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.

**Verse 26. *And wept*** Had they humbled themselves, fasted, and prayed, and offered sacrifices at first, they had not been discomfited.

***And fasted that day until even*** This is the first place where fasting is mentioned as a religious ceremony, or as a means of obtaining help from God. And in this case, and many since, it has been powerfully effectual. At present it is but little used; a strong proof that self-denial is wearing out of fashion.

**Verse 28. *Phinehas, the son of Eleazar*** This was the same Phinehas who is mentioned Numbers 25:7, and consequently these transactions must have taken place shortly after the death of Joshua.

**Verse 29. *Israel set liers in wait*** Though God had promised them success, they knew they could expect it only in the use of the proper means. They used all prudent precaution, and employed all their military skill.

**Verse 32. *Let us-draw them from the city*** They had two reasons for this: 1. They had placed an ambush behind Gibeah, which was to enter and burn the city as soon as the Benjamites had left it. 2. It would seem that the slingers, by being within the city and its fortifications, had great advantage against the Israelites by their slings, whom they could not annoy with their swords, unless they got them to the plain country.

**Verse 33. *Put themselves in array at Baal-tamar*** The Israelites seem to have divided their army into three divisions; one was at Baal-tamar, a second behind the city in ambush, and the third skirmished with the Benjamites before Gibeah.

**Verse 35. *Twenty and five thousand and a hundred*** As the Benjamites consisted only of twenty-six thousand and seven hundred slingers; or, as the Vulgate, Septuagint, and others read, twenty-five thousand, which is most probably the true reading; then the whole of the Benjamites were cut to pieces, except six hundred men, who we are informed fled to the rock Rimmon, where they fortified themselves.

**Verse 38. *Now there was an appointed sign*** From this verse to the end of the chapter we have the details of the same operations which are mentioned, in a general way, in the preceding part of the chapter.

**Verse 45. *Unto the rock of Rimmon*** This was some strong place, but where situated is not known. Here they maintained themselves four months, and it was by these alone that the tribe of Benjamin was preserved from utter extermination. See the following chapter.

It is scarcely possible to imagine any thing more horrid than the indiscriminate and relentless slaughter of both innocent and guilty mentioned in this chapter. The crime of the men of Gibeah was great, but there was no adequate cause for this relentless extermination of a whole tribe. There was neither justice nor judgment in this case; they were on all sides brutal, cruel, and ferocious: and no wonder; there was no king in Israel-no effective civil government, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. There was no proper leader; no man that had authority and influence to repress the disorderly workings of the pell-mell mob.

## CHAPTER 21

*The Israelites mourn because of the desolation of Benjamin, and consult the Lord, 1-4. They inquire who of Israel had not come to this war, as they had vowed that those who would not make this a common cause should be put to death, 5, 6. They consult how they shall procure wives for the six hundred men who had fled to the rock Rimmon, 7. Finding that the men of Jabesh-gilead had not come to the war, they send twelve thousand men against them, smite them, and bring off four hundred virgins, which they give for wives to those who had taken refuge in Rimmon, 8-14. To provide for the two hundred which remained, they propose to carry off two hundred virgins of the daughters of Shiloh, who might come to the annual feast of the Lord, held at that place, 15-22. They take this counsel, and each carries away a virgin from the feast, 23-25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 1.** *Now the men of Israel had sworn* Of this oath we had not heard before; but it appears they had commenced this war with a determination to destroy the Benjamites utterly, and that if any of them escaped the sword no man should be permitted to give him his daughter to wife. By these means the remnant of the tribe must soon have been annihilated.

**Verse 2.** *The people came to the house of God* Literally, the people came **בֵּיתֵאל** to Bethel; this is considered as the name of a place by the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Septuagint.

*And wept sore* Their revenge was satisfied, and now reflection brings them to contrition for what they had done.

**Verse 3.** *Why is this come to pass* This was a very impertinent question. They knew well enough how it came to pass. It was right that the men of Gibeah should be punished, and it was right that they who vindicated them should share in that punishment; but they carried their revenge too far, they endeavored to exterminate both man and beast, Judges 20:48.

**Verse 4. *Built there an altar*** This affords some evidence that this was not a regular place of worship, else an altar would have been found in the place; and their act was not according to the law, as may be seen in several places of the Pentateuch. But there was neither king nor law among them, and they did whatever appeared right in their own eyes.

**Verse 7. *How shall we do for wives for them*** From this it appears that they had destroyed all the Benjamitish women and children! They had set out with the purpose of exterminating the whole tribe, and therefore they massacred the women, that if any of the men escaped, they might neither find wife nor daughter; and they bound themselves under an oath not to give any of their females to any of the remnant of this tribe, that thus the whole tribe might utterly perish.

**Verse 8. *There came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead*** As they had sworn to destroy those who would not assist in this war, Judges 21:5, they determined to destroy the men of Jabesh, and to leave none alive except the virgins, and to give these to the six hundred Benjamites that had escaped to the rock Rimmon. So twelve thousand men went, smote the city, and killed all the males and all the married women. The whole account is dreadful; and none could have been guilty of all these enormities but those who were abandoned of God. The crime of the men of Gibeah was of the deepest die; the punishment, involving both the guilty and innocent, was extended to the most criminal excess; and their mode of redressing the evil which they had occasioned was equally abominable.

**Verse 13. *And to call peaceably unto them.*** To proclaim peace to them; to assure them that the enmity was all over, and that they might with safety leave their strong hold.

**Verse 14. *Yet so they sufficed them not.*** There were six hundred men at Rimmon, and all the young women they saved from Jabesh were only four hundred; therefore, there were two hundred still wanting.

**Verse 19. *There is a feast of the Lord*** What this feast was is not known: it might be either the passover, pentecost, or the feast of tabernacles, or indeed some other peculiar to this place. All the above feasts were celebrated at that time of the year when the vines were in full leaf;

therefore the Benjamites might easily conceal themselves in the vineyards; and the circumstances will answer to any of those feasts.

***On the east side of the highway, etc.*** I can see no reason for this minute description, unless it intimates that this feast was to be held this year in rather a different place to that which was usual: and, as the Benjamites had been shut up in their strong hold in Rimmon, they might not have heard of this alteration; and it was necessary, in such a case, to give them the most circumstantial information, that they might succeed in their enterprise without being discovered.

**Verse 21. *And catch you every man his wife*** That is, Let each man of the two hundred Benjamites seize and carry off a woman, whom he is, from that hour, to consider as his wife.

**Verse 22. *Be favorable unto them*** They promise to use their influence with the men of Shiloh to induce them to consent to a connection thus fraudulently obtained, and which the necessity of the case appeared to them to justify.

***We reserved not to each man his wife in the war*** The reading of the Vulgate is very remarkable: *Miseremini eorum, non enim rapuerunt eas jure bellantium atque victorum, sed rogantibus ut acciperent non dedistis, et a vestra parte peccatum est.* — “Pardon them, for they have not taken them as victors take captives in war; but when they requested you to give them you did not; therefore the fault is your own.” Here it is intimated that application had been made to the people of Shiloh to furnish these two hundred Benjamites with wives, and that they had refused; and it was this refusal that induced the Benjamites to seize and carry them off. Does not St. Jerome, the translator, refer to the history of the rape of the Sabine virgins? See below. Houbigant translates the Hebrew thus: *Veniam quaeso illis date; non enim ad bellum duxerant suam quisque uxorem; et nisi eas illis nunc concedetis, delicti rei eritis.* — “Pardon them, I beseech you, for they have not each taken his wife to the war; and unless you now give these to them, you will sin.” This intimates that, as the Benjamites had not taken their wives with them to the war, where some, if not all, of them might have escaped; and the Israelites found them in the cities, and put them all to the sword; therefore the people of Shiloh should give up those



two hundred young women to them for wives; and if they did not, it would be a sin, the circumstances of the case being considered.

Our translation seems to give as a reason to the men of Shiloh why they should pardon this rape, that as they had not permitted the women to live in their war with Benjamin, therefore these men are now destitute; and the concession which they wish them to make may be considered as more of an obligation to the Israelites than to the Benjamites. It is an obscure sentence; and the reader, if not pleased with what is laid down, may endeavor to satisfy himself with others which he may find in different versions and commentators. The Vulgate gives a good sense to the passage; but probably Houbigant comes nearest to the meaning.

**Verse 23. *They went and returned unto their inheritance*** It appears that the Benjamites acted in the most honorable way by the women whom they had thus violently carried off; and we may rest assured they took them to an inheritance at least equal to their own, for it does not appear that any part of the lands of the Benjamites was alienated from them, and the six hundred men in question shared, for the present, the inheritance of many thousands.

**Verse 24. *Every man to his tribe*** Though this must have been four months after the war with Benjamin, Judges 20:47; yet it appears the armies did not disband till they had got the remnant of Benjamin settled, as is here related.

**Verse 25. *In those days there was no king in Israel*** Let no one suppose that the sacred writer, by relating the atrocities in this and the preceding chapters, justifies the actions themselves; by no means. Indeed, they cannot be justified; and the writer by relating them gives the strongest proof of the authenticity of the whole, by such an impartial relation of facts that were highly to be discredit of his country.

I HAVE already referred to the rape of the Sabine virgins. The story is told by Livy, Hist. lib. i., cap. 9, the substance of which is as follows: Romulus having opened an asylum at his new-built city of Rome for all kinds of persons, the number of men who flocked to his standard was soon very considerable; but as they had few women, or, as Livy says, penuria mulierum, a dearth of women, he sent to all the neighboring states to invite

them to make inter-marriages with his people. Not one of the tribes around him received the proposal; and some of them insulted his ambassador, and said, *Ecquod feminis quoque asylum aperuissent? Id enim demum compar connubium fore?* “Why have you not also opened an asylum for WOMEN, which would have afforded you suitable matches?” This exasperated Romulus, but he concealed his resentment, and, having published that he intended a great feast to Neptune Equester, invited all the neighboring tribes to come to it: they did so, and were received by the Romans with the greatest cordiality and friendship. The Sabines, with their wives and children, came in great numbers, and each Roman citizen entertained a stranger. When the games began, and each was intent on the spectacle before them, at a signal given, the young Romans rushed in among the Sabine women, and each carried off one, whom however they used in the kindest manner, marrying them according to their own rites with due solemnity, and admitting them to all the rights and privileges of the new commonwealth. The number carried off on this occasion amounted to near seven hundred; but this act of violence produced disastrous wars between the Romans and the Sabines, which were at last happily terminated by the mediation of the very women whose rape had been the cause of their commencement. The story may be seen at large in Livy, Plutarch, and others.

Thus ends the book of Judges; a work which, while it introduces the history of Samuel and that of the kings of Judah and Israel, forms in some sort a supplement to the book of Joshua, and furnishes the only account we have of those times of anarchy and confusion, which extended nearly from the times of the elders who survived Joshua, to the establishment of the Jewish monarchy under Saul, David, and their successors. For other uses of this book, see the preface.

### **MASORETIC NOTES ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES**

The number of verses in this book is six hundred and eighteen.

Its Masoretic chapters are fourteen.

And its middle verse is Judges 10:8: And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel, etc.

Corrected for a new edition, December 1, 1827. — A. C.

# PREFACE TO THE BOOK

OF

## RUTH

WHEN and by whom the book of Ruth was written, are points not agreed on among critics and commentators.

As to the transactions recorded in it, they are variously placed. In the book itself there is no other notation of time than merely this, that the things came to pass in the days when the judges ruled; therefore some have placed these transactions under Ehud; others, under Gideon; others, under Barak; others, under Abimelech; and others, under Shamgar. This last is the opinion of Archbishop Usher; and most chronologers adopt it. The book is evidently an Appendix to the book of Judges, and contains a perfect history in itself; and therefore should not be inserted in any part of that book. It also seems to be an Introduction to the books of Samuel, in which the history of David is contained, as it gives the genealogy of this prince. It is also not without its use in matters which respect the Gospels, as it ascertains the line by which Jesus Christ came.

As to the author, he is as uncertain as the time. It has been attributed to Hezekiah, to Ezra, and to Samuel; and it is most likely that the author of the two books of Samuel was also the writer of this little book, as it seems necessary to complete his plan of the history of David. See the preface to the first book of Samuel.

The sum of the history contained in this book is the following: A man of

years both these brethren died; and Naomi, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, set out to return to the land of Judah, she having heard that plenty was again restored to her country. On the way she besought her daughters to return to their own country and kindred. Orpah took her advice, and, after an affectionate parting, returned; but Ruth insisted on accompanying her mother-in-law. They arrived in Bethlehem about the time of harvest; and Ruth went into the fields to glean for their support. The ground on which she was accidentally employed belonged to Boaz, one of the relatives of Elimelech, her father-in-law; who, finding who she was, ordered her to be kindly treated, and appointed her both meat and drink with his own servants. Finding that she was by marriage his kinswoman, he purposed to take her to wife, if a nearer kinsman who was then living should refuse. He was accordingly applied to, refused to take Ruth, and surrendered his right to her, according to the custom of those times, at the gate of Bethlehem, before the elders of the city. Boaz then took her to wife, by whom she had Obed, who was father to Jesse, the father of David.

To the questions, Who was Boaz? and, Who was Ruth? no satisfactory answer can be given: all we know for certain is, that Boaz was an Ephraimite of Bethlehem; and Ruth a Moabitess, and consequently educated a heathen. But what we want in certainty several have attempted to supply by conjecture; with them Boaz was the same as Ibzan, Judges 12:8-10; and Ruth was the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab. This is the opinion maintained by the Chaldee Targum on this book; to which I shall, in the course of the notes, have farther occasion to refer. The rabbins say that Elimelech was brother to Salmon, who married Rahab; and that Naomi was his niece.

The genealogy of David, as stated in this book, is as follows:—

A.M. 2236. Judah, Pharez, Ezron, called also Hezron, Aram, called also Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, who married Rahab, Boaz, who married Ruth, Obed, who begat Jesse, A.M. 2919. David born.

This chronology is according to Archbishop Usher; and includes, from Judah to David six hundred and seventy years.

# THE BOOK

OF

# RUTH

- Year before the common year of Christ, 1186.
- Year from the Flood, 1162.
- Year before the first Olympiad, 410.
- Creation from Tisri, or September, 2818.
- This chronology is upon the supposition that Obed was forty years of age at the birth of Jesse; and Jesse, fifty at the birth of David.

## CHAPTER 1

*Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, flee from a famine in the land of Israel, and go to sojourn in Moab, 1, 2. Here his two sons marry; and, in the space of ten years, both their father and they die, 3-6. Naomi sets out on her return to her own country, accompanied by her daughters-in-law Orpah and Ruth; whom she endeavors to persuade to return to their own people, 7-13. Orpah returns, but Ruth accompanies her mother-in-law, 14-18. They arrive at Beth-lehem in the time of the barley harvest, 19-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1.** *When the judges ruled* We know not under what judge this

**Chilion** Finished, completed.

**Verse 3. *Elimelech-died*** Probably a short time after his arrival in Moab.

**Verse 4. *And they took them wives*** The Targum very properly observes, that they transgressed the decree of the word of the Lord, and took to themselves strange women.

**Verse 5. *And Mahlon and Chilion died*** The Targum adds, And because they transgressed the decree of the word of the Lord, and joined affinity with strange people, therefore their days were cut off. It is very likely that there is more here than conjecture.

**Verse 6. *She had heard*** By the mouth of an angel, says the Targum.

***The Lord had visited his people*** “Because of the righteousness of Ibban the judge, and because of the supplications of pious Boaz.” -Targum.

It is imagined, and not without probability, that Mahlon and Chilion are the same with Joash and Saraph, mentioned 1 Chronicles 4:22, where the Hebrew should be thus translated, and Joash and Saraph, who married in Moab, and dwelt in Lehem. See the Hebrew.

**Verse 11. *Are there yet any more sons*** This was spoken in allusion to the custom, that when a married brother died without leaving posterity, his brother should take his widow; and the children of such a marriage were accounted the children of the deceased brother. There is something very persuasive and affecting in the address of Naomi to her daughters-in-law. Let us observe the particulars:—

1. She intimates that she had no other sons to give them.
2. That she was not with child; so there could be no expectation.
3. That she was too old to have a husband.
4. That though she should marry that night, and have children, yet they could not wait till such sons were marriageable; she therefore begs them to return to their own country where they might be comfortably settled among their own kindred.



**Verse 14. *And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law*** The Septuagint add, **και επεστρεψεν εις τον λαον αυτης**, And returned to her own people. The Vulgate, Syrian, and Arabic, are to the same purpose.

**Verse 15. *Gone back-unto her gods*** They were probably both idolaters, their having been proselytes is an unfounded conjecture. Chemosh was the grand idol of the Moabites. The conversion of Ruth probably commenced at this time.

**Verse 16. *And Ruth said*** A more perfect surrender was never made of friendly feelings to a friend: I will not leave thee-I will follow thee: I will lodge where thou lodgest-take the same fare with which thou meetest; thy people shall be my people-I most cheerfully abandon my own country, and determine to end my days in thine. I will also henceforth have no god but thy God, and be joined with thee in worship, as I am in affection and consanguinity. I will cleave unto thee even unto death; die where thou diest; and be buried, if possible, in the same grave. This was a most extraordinary attachment, and evidently without any secular motive.

The Targum adds several things to this conversation between Naomi and Ruth. I shall subjoin them: “And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee,” for I desire to become a proselyte. And Naomi said, We are commanded to keep the Sabbath and other holy days; and on it not to travel more than two thousand cubits. And Ruth said, “Whither thou goest, I will go.” And Naomi said, We are commanded not to lodge with the Gentiles. Ruth answered, “Where thou lodgest, I will lodge.” And Naomi said, We are commanded to observe the one hundred and thirteen precepts. Ruth answered, What thy people observe, that will I observe; as if they had been my people of old. And Naomi said, We are commanded not to worship with any strange worship. Ruth answered, “Thy God shall be my God.” Naomi said, We have four kinds of capital punishment for criminals; stoning, burning, beheading, and hanging. Ruth answered, “In whatsoever manner thou diest, I will die.” Naomi said, We have a house of burial. Ruth answered, “And there will I be buried.”

It is very likely that some such conversation as this took place between the elders and those who were becoming proselytes. This verse is famous among those who strive to divine by the Bible. I should relate the

particulars, but am afraid they might lead to a continuance of the practice. In my youth I have seen it done, and was then terrified.

**Verse 17. *The Lord do so to me, and more*** May he inflict any of those punishments on me, and any worse punishment, if I part from thee till death. And it appears that she was true to her engagement; for Naomi was nourished in the house of Boaz in her old age, and became the fosterer and nurse of their son Obed, Ruth 4:15, 16.

**Verse 19. *All the city was moved about them*** It appears that Naomi was not only well known, but highly respected also at Bethlehem; a proof that Elimelech was of high consideration in that place.

**Verse 20. *Call me not Naomi*** That is, beautiful or pleasant.

***Call me Mara*** That is, bitter; one whose life is grievous to her.

***The Almighty*** שַׁדַּי Shaddai, He who is self-sufficient, has taken away the props and supports of my life.

**Verse 21. *I went out full*** Having a husband and two sons.

***The Lord hath brought me home again empty*** Having lost all three by death. It is also likely that Elimelech took considerable property with him into the land of Moab; for as he fled from the face of the famine, he would naturally take his property with him; and on this Naomi subsisted till her return to Bethlehem, which she might not have thought of till all was spent.

**Verse 22. *In the beginning of barley harvest.*** This was in the beginning of spring, for the barley harvest began immediately after the passover, and that feast was held on the 15th of the month Nisan, which corresponds nearly with our March.

The Targum says, “They came to Beth-lehem on that day in which the children of Israel began to mow the sheaf of barley which was to be waved before the Lord.” This circumstance is the more distinctly marked, because of Ruth’s gleaning, mentioned in the succeeding chapter.

1. THE native, the amiable simplicity, in which the story of the preceding chapter is told, is a proof of its genuineness. There are several sympathetic

circumstances recorded here which no forger could have invented. There is too much of nature to admit any thing of art.

2. On the marriage of Orpah and Ruth, and the wish of Naomi that they might find rest in the house of their husbands, there are some pious and sensible observations in Mr. NESS'S History and Mystery of the Book of Ruth, from which I shall lay the following extract before my readers:—

“A married estate is a state of rest; so it is called here, and in Ruth 3:1. Hence marriage is called *portus juventutis*, the port or haven of young people; whose affections, while unmarried, are continually floating or tossed to and fro, like a ship upon the waters, till they come into this happy harbour. There is a natural propension in most persons towards nuptial communion, as all created beings have a natural tendency towards their proper center, (*leve sursum, et grave deorsum*.) and are restless out of it, so the rabbins say, *Requirit vir costam suam, et requirit femina sedem suam*, ‘The man is restless while he misses his rib that was taken out of his side; and the woman is restless till she get under the man’s arm, from whence she was taken.’ O! look up to God then, ye unmarried ones, and cry with good Naomi, The Lord grant me rest for my roving affections in the house of some good consort, that I may live in peace and plenty, with content and comfort all my days. Know that your marriage is, of all your civil affairs, of the greatest importance, having an influence upon your whole life. It is either your making or marring in this world; ‘tis like a stratagem in war, wherein a miscarriage cannot be recalled when we will, for we marry for life. I am thine, and thou art mine, *brevis quidem cantiuncula est*, ‘is a short song;’ *sed longum habet epiphonema*, ‘but it hath a long undersong.’ So an error here is irrecoverable; you have need of Argus’s hundred eyes to look withal before you leap.” This is good advice; but who among the persons concerned will have grace enough to take it?

## CHAPTER 2

*Ruth goes to glean in the field of Boaz, 1-3. Boaz finds her, and inquires who she is, 4-7. He speaks kindly to her, gives her permission to follow his reapers, and orders them to use her well, 8-16. She returns in the evening to Naomi, and tells her of her fare; from whom she receives encouragement and advice, 17-23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. *A mighty man of wealth*** We have already seen that some suppose Boaz to have been one of the judges of Israel; he was no doubt a man of considerable property.

**Verse 2. *Glean ears of corn*** The word glean comes from the French glaner, to gather ears or grains of corn. This was formerly a general custom in England and Ireland; the poor went into the fields and collected the straggling ears of corn after the reapers; and it was long supposed that this was their right, and that the law recognized it. But although it has been an old custom, I find that it is now settled, by a solemn judgment in the court of common pleas, that a right to glean in the harvest field cannot be claimed by any person at common law; see Law Dictionary, article gleaning. Any person may permit or prevent it in his own grounds. By the Irish acts, 25 Hen. VIII., c. 1, and 28 Hen. VIII., c. 24, gleaning and leasing are so restricted as to be in fact prohibited in that part of the United Kingdom. See the note on Leviticus 19:9.

***After him in whose sight I shall find grace.*** She did not mean Boaz; but she purposed to go out where they were now reaping, and glean after any person who might permit her, or use her in a friendly manner. The words seem to intimate that, notwithstanding the law of Moses, the gleaners might be prevented by the owner of the field.

**Verse 3. *And her hap was*** So she was accidentally or providentially led to that part of the cultivated country which belonged to Boaz.

**Verse 4. Boaz came from Beth-lehem** This salutation between Boaz and his reapers is worthy of particular regard; he said, יהוה עמם Yehovah immachem, “Jehovah be with you!” They said, ברכת יהוה yebarechecha Yehovah, “May Jehovah bless thee!” Can a pious mind read these godly salutations without wishing for a return of those simple primitive times? The words may be thus paraphrased: “May God be with you, to preserve you from accidents, and strengthen you to accomplish your work!” “May God bless THEE with the increase of the field, and grace to use his bounty to the glory of the Giver!”

**Verse 5. His servant that was set over the reapers** This was a kind of steward or hind who had the under management of the estate. Some think that an officer of this kind is intended in the description given by Homer of the labors of a harvest field, as represented by Vulcan on one compartment of the shield which he made for Achilles:—

εν δ' ετιθει τεμενος βαθυληιον· ενθα δ εριθοι  
 ἦμων, οξειας δρεπανας εν χερσιν εχοντες·  
 δραγματα δ' αλλα μετ' ογμον επμον επητριμα πιπτον εραζε,  
 αλλα δ' αμαλλοδετηρες εν ελλεδανοισι δεοντο.  
 τρεις δ' αρ' αμαλλοδετηρες εφεστασαν· αυταρ οπισθε  
 παιδες δραγμευοντες, εν αγκαλιδεσσι φεροντες,  
 ασπερχες παρεχον· βασιλευς δ' εν τοισι σιωπη  
 σκηπτρον εχων εστηκε επ' ογμου γηθοσσυος κηρ.  
 κηρυκες δ' απανευθεν υπο δρυι δαιτα πενοντο·  
 βουν δ' ιερευσαντες μεγαν, αμφεπον· αι δε γυναικες  
 δειπνον εριθοισιν, λευκ' αλφιτα πολλα παλυνον.

Iliad xviii., v. 550.

*There too he form'd the likeness of a field  
 Crowded with corn, in which the reapers toil'd,  
 Each with a sharp-tooth'd sickle in his hand.*

*Along the furrow here, the harvest fell  
 In frequent handfuls; there, they bound the sheaves.  
 Three binders of the sheaves their sultry task*

*All plied industrious, and behind them boys  
 Attended, filling with the corn their arms,  
 And offering still their bundles to be bound.*

*Amid them, staff in hand, the master stood,  
Enjoying, mute the order of the field:  
While, shaded by an oak, apart his train*

*Prepared the banquet—a well thriven ox  
New slain, and the attendant maidens mix'd  
Large supper for the hinds, of whitest flour.*

COWPER.

This scene is well described; and the person who acts as overseer is here called βασιλευς, king, and his staff is called σκηπτρον, a scepter; and he stands in mute dignity, merely to see that the work is well done, and that each person performs his task; and there appear to me to be gleaners in the description, viz., the boys who gather the handfuls after the three binders. See the Greek.

**Verse 7. *That she tarried a little in the house.*** It seems as if the reapers were now resting in their tent, and that Ruth had just gone in with them to take her rest also.

**Verse 8. *Abide here fast by my maidens*** These were probably employed in making bands, and laying on them enough to form a sheaf, which the binders would tie and form into shocks or thraves. When the maidens had gathered up the scattered handfuls thrown down by the reapers, Ruth picked up any straggling heads or ears which they had left.

**Verse 9. *The young men that they shall not touch thee*** This was peculiarly necessary, as she was a stranger and unprotected.

**Verse 10. *Then she fell on her face*** Prostrated herself, as was the custom in the East when inferiors approached those of superior rank. The Targum adds to the conversation between Ruth and Boaz: “How, says she, have I obtained grace in thy sight, that thou shouldest acknowledge me who am a stranger and one of the daughters of Moab, of whom it is said, The unclean shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord? And Boaz, answered, It has been certainly told me by the word of the wise, that what the Lord hath decreed, he hath not decreed concerning the women but the men. And it hath been surely said to me by prophecy, that kings and prophets shall proceed from thee because of the good which thou hast done,” etc.

**Verse 12. *The Lord recompense thy work*** The dutiful respect which thou hast paid to thy husband, and thy tender and affectionate attachment to thy aged mother-in-law.

***And a full reward be given thee*** This is spoken with great modesty and piety: The kindness I show thee is little in comparison of thy desert; God alone can give thee a full reward for thy kindness to thy husband and mother-in-law, and he will do it, because thou art come to trust under his wings-to become a proselyte to his religion. The metaphor is taken from the young of fowls, who, seeing a bird of prey, run to their mother to be covered by her wings from danger, and also to take shelter from storms, tempests, cold, etc. It is evident from this that Ruth had already attached herself to the Jewish religion.

**Verse 13. *Not like unto one of thine hand-maidens.*** I am as unworthy of thy regards as any of thine own maidservants, and yet thou showest me distinguished kindness.

**Verse 14. *Dip thy morsel in the vinegar.*** The **חֹמֶץ** chomets, which we here translate vinegar, seems to have been some refreshing kind of acid sauce used by the reapers to dip their bread in, which both cooled and refreshed them. Vinegar, rob of fruits, etc., are used for this purpose in the East to the present day; and the custom of the Arabs, according to Dr. Shaw, is to dip the bread and hand together into these cooling and refreshing articles.

***Parched corn*** This was a frequent repast among the ancients in almost all countries; see the notes on Leviticus 2:1-14.

**Verse 15. *Let her glean even among the sheaves*** This was a privilege; for no person should glean till the sheaves were all bound, and the shocks set up.

**Verse 17. *An ephah of barley.*** Not less than seven gallons and a half; a good day's work. On Hebrew measures of capacity, see the note on Exodus 16:16.

**Verse 18. *And gave to her that she had reserved*** As Ruth had received a distinct portion at dinner-time, of which she had more than she could eat,

Ruth 2:14; it appears she brought the rest home to her mother-in-law, as is here related.

**Verse 20. *To the living and to the dead.*** Naomi and Ruth were the living; and they were also the representatives of Elimelech and Mahlon, who were dead. Naomi was of the family; and Ruth, though not of the family, was a representative of one of its deceased branches, being the widow of Mahlon.

***One of our next kinsmen.*** מִגְּאֹלֵינוּ מִגְּאֹלֵינוּ miggoaleynu, of our redeemers, one who has the right to redeem the forfeited inheritance of the family. The word גֹּאֵל goel signifies a near kinsman—one who by the Mosaic law had a right to redeem an inheritance, and also was permitted to vindicate or revenge the death of his relation by killing the slayer, if he found him out of the cities of refuge.

In order to prevent families from running to decay, if a brother died childless, the next unmarried brother took his widow; and the children from that marriage were reputed the children of the deceased brother. The office of the next akin was threefold: 1. It belonged to him to buy back the forfeited inheritance, or the liberty of him who had been obliged to sell himself for a servant. 2. It was his right to avenge the blood of any of the family who had been killed, by killing the murderer. 3. It belonged to him to take the widow of a deceased brother or relative, if he died childless. If the nearest akin in any case refused, he was treated with indignity, lost his right to the inheritance, and the next akin to him might come forward and take the widow, etc., as in the case of Boaz. See Ruth 4:4-10.

**Verse 21. *Keep fast by my young men*** The word הַנְּעָרִים hannearim should be translated servants, both the male and female being included in it; the latter especially, as we see in Ruth 2:22, 23.

**Verse 23. *And of wheat harvest*** That is, she was to continue gleaning in the farm of Boaz to the end of the barley harvest; and then, when the wheat harvest began, to continue to its conclusion in the same way. In the interim, as well as each night, she lodged with her mother-in-law.

1. RUTH seems to have been a woman of a very amiable mind: she was modest, and she was industrious, and most probably a comely woman; and



all these things served to attract the attention of Boaz, and to engage his affection. Her attachment also to her mother-in-law could not fail to secure his esteem. All these things worked together in the course of Providence, to bring about a matrimonial connection, which in its issue was intimately connected with the salvation of a lost world; for, from this very line, Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, sprang; and Ruth showed herself as worthy to be one of His progenitors as the Virgin Mary was to be His mother. See the notes on Matthew 1:1-16

2. We should carefully attend to the leadings and to the workings of God's providence; it is our duty and our interest to do both, for the path of duty is ever the way of safety. Had not Ruth acted thus, how dreary and uncomfortable must her life have been! but she followed God fully, and in a path apparently dangerous, and yet, not only sustained no injury, but succeeded well in all things: from this, as well as from innumerable other circumstances, we see the truth of that word, Acknowledge him in all thy ways, and he will direct thy steps; and with this we may ever connect, Trust in the Lord with thy whole heart, and lean not to thy own understanding. Whosoever follows God in simplicity of heart, will most assuredly be guided into all truth.

## CHAPTER 3

*Naomi's advice to Ruth, how to procure herself a marriage with Boaz, 1-5. She acts according to her mother-in-law's direction, and is kindly received by Boaz, who promises to marry her, should her nearer kinsman refuse, 6-13. He gives her six measures of barley, and sends her away privately to her mother-in-law, who augurs favorably of the issue of the plan she had laid, 14-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *Shall I not seek rest for thee*** That is, Shall I not endeavor to procure thee a proper husband? See Ruth 1:9, and the observations at the end of that chapter.

**Verse 2. *He winnoweth barley tonight*** It is very likely that the winnowing of grain was effected by taking up, in a broad thin vessel or sieve, a portion of the corn, and letting it down slowly in the wind; thus the grain would, by its own weight, fall in one place, while the chaff, etc., would be carried to a distance by the wind. It is said here that this was done at night; probably what was threshed out in the day was winnowed in the evening, when the sea breeze set in, which was common in Palestine; and as this took place in the evening only, that was the time in which they would naturally winnow their corn.

**Verse 3. *Wash thyself, therefore*** She made Ruth put on her best dress, that Boaz might, in the course of the day, be the more attracted by her person, and be the better disposed to receive her as Naomi wished.

**Verse 4. *Uncover his feet, and lay thee down*** It is said that women in the East, when going to the bed of their lawful husbands, through modesty, and in token of subjection, go to the bed's foot, and gently raising the clothes, creep under them up to their place. See Calmet.

On the whole, we must say, had not Boaz been a person of extraordinary piety, prudence, and continence, this experiment might have been fatal to

Ruth. We cannot easily account for this transaction, probably Naomi knew more than she revealed to her daughter-in-law. The experiment however was dangerous, and should in no sense be imitated.

***He will tell thee what thou shalt do*** The Targum reads the clause thus: Thou shalt ask counsel from him, “and he shall tell thee what thou shouldest do.”

***Verse 7. When Boaz had eaten and drunk*** The Targum adds, “He blessed the name of the Lord, who had heard his prayer, and removed famine from the land of Israel.”

***Went to lie down*** As the threshing-floors of the Eastern nations are in general in the open air, it is very likely that the owner or some confidential person continued in the fields till the grain was secured, having a tent in the place where the corn was threshed and winnowed. Boaz seems to have acted thus.

***Verse 8. The man was afraid, and turned himself*** The verb ילפת yillapheth, which we render he turned himself, has puzzled even the Targumist, who translates the clause thus: “The man trembled, and his flesh became like a (boiled) turnip through fear.” It is fully evident Boaz had no intimation of the present proceedings. To this verse the Targumist adds much; he says, “Boaz subdued his concupiscence, and acted towards her as Joseph did to the Egyptian wife of his master, and as Pelatiel, the son of Laish the pious, did to Michal, the daughter of Saul, the wife of David, who put a sword between Michal and himself, because he would not approach to her.”

***Verse 9. Spread therefore thy skirt over thine hand maid*** Hebrew, Spread thy wing. The wing is the emblem of protection, and is a metaphor taken from the young of fowls, which run under the wings of their mothers, that they may be saved from birds of prey. The meaning here is, Take me to thee for wife; and so the Targum has translated it, Let thy name be called

**Verse 10. *In the latter end than at the beginning*** It is not easy to find out what Boaz means. Perhaps **חֶסֶד** chesed, which we translate kindness, means piety; as if he had said: Thou hast given great proof of thy piety in this latter instance, when thou hast avoided the young, and those of thy own age, to associate thyself with an elderly man, merely for the purpose of having the Divine injunction fulfilled, viz., that the brother, or next akin, might take the wife of the deceased, and raise a family to him who had died childless, that his name might not become extinct in Israel: this latter act is a greater proof of thy piety and sincerity than any thing that could be inferred from thy becoming a proselyte.

***Whether poor or rich.*** So it appears from this that it was not to mend her condition in life that Ruth endeavored to get Boaz for her husband, for she might have had a rich young man, but she preferred the building up the house of her deceased husband. See above.

**Verse 12. *There is a kinsman nearer than I.*** It is very likely that Naomi was not acquainted with this circumstance. Some have supposed that there was a brother of Elimelech remaining, who was nearer than Boaz, who is supposed to have been only a nephew; the former, therefore, must have a prior right.

**Verse 13. *As the Lord liveth*** Thus he bound himself by an oath to take her to wife if the other should refuse.

**Verse 15. *Bring the veil*** **הַמַּטְפָּחַת** hammit pachath; this seems to have been a cloak, plaid, or what the Arabs call hayk, which has been largely explained elsewhere. See Judges 14:12.

***Six measures of barley*** We supply the word measures, for the Hebrew mentions no quantity. The Targum renders six seahs, **שֵׁית סְאִי** shith sein, which, as a seah was about two gallons and a half, must have been a very heavy load for a woman; and so the Targumist thought, for he adds, And she received strength from the Lord to carry it. If the omer be meant, which is about six pints, the load would not be so great, as this would amount to but about four gallons and a half; a very goodly present. The Targum says, that on receiving these six measures “it was said in the spirit of prophecy, that from her should proceed the six righteous persons of the world, viz., David, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and the King

Messiah; each of whom should be blessed with six benedictions.” It is, however, remarkable, that the Targum makes the Messiah to spring from her through the line of David, and goes down to Daniel and his companions; which Daniel prophesied so clearly, not only of the advent of Messiah the prince, but also of the very time in which he was to come, and the sacrificial death he was to die.

**Verse 18.** *Until thou know how the matter will fall* That is, whether he who is nearer of kin than Boaz will take thee to wife; do not return again till this thing is determined. Boaz lost no time to bring this to an issue, as we shall see in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

*Boaz gathers a council of the elders at the city gates, states the case, and proposes to the nearest kinsman to redeem the inheritance of Elimelech, and take Ruth to wife, 1-5. The kinsman refuses, and relinquishes his right to Boaz, 6. The manner of redemption in such cases, 7, 8. Boaz redeems the inheritance in the presence of the elders, and of the people, who witness the contract, and pray for God's blessing upon the marriage, 9-12. Boaz takes Ruth for wife, and she bears a son, 13. The people's observations on the birth of the child, 14, 15. It is given to Naomi to nurse, 16. The neighboring women name the child, and the book concludes with the genealogy of David, 17-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1. *Then went Boaz up to the gate*** We have often had occasion to remark that the gate or entrance to any city or town was the place where the court of justice was ordinarily kept. For an account of the officers in such places, see the note on Deuteronomy 16:18.

***Ho, such a one!* — *sit down here.*** This familiar mode of compellation is first used here. The original is שבה פה לפני אלמני shebah poh, peloni almoni! “Hark ye, Mr. Such-a-one of such a place! come and sit down here.” This is used when the person of the individual is known, and his name and residence unknown. אלמני almoni comes from אלם alam, to be silent or hidden, hence the Septuagint render it by κρυπτε thou unknown person: לפני peloni comes from פלה palah, to sever or distinguish; you of such a particular place. Modes of compellation of this kind are common in all languages.

**Verse 2. *He took ten men*** Probably it required this number to constitute a court. How simple and how rational was this proceeding! 1. The man who had a suit went to the city gates. 2. Here he stopped till the person with whom he had the suit came to the gate on his way to his work. 3. He called him by name, and he stopped and sat down. 4. Then ten elders were called,

and they came and sat down. 5. When all this was done, the appellant preferred his suit. 6. Then the appellee returned his answer. 7. When the elders heard the case, and the response of the appellee, they pronounced judgment, which judgment was always according to the custom of the place. 8. When this was done, the people who happened to be present witnessed the issue. And thus the business was settled without lawyers or legal casuistry. A question of this kind, in one of our courts of justice, in these enlightened times, would require many days' previous preparation of the attorney, and several hours' arguing between counsellor Botherum and counsellor Borum, till even an enlightened and conscientious judge would find it extremely difficult to decide whether Naomi might sell her own land, and whether Boaz or Pelsoni might buy it! O, glorious uncertainty of modern law!

**Verse 3. *Naomi-selleth a parcel of land*** She was reduced to want; the immediate inheritors were extinct, and it was now open for the next heir to purchase the land, and thus preserve the inheritance in the family according to the custom of Israel.

**Verse 4. *I thought to advertise thee*** Both Dr. Kennicott and Father Houbigant have noticed several corruptions in the pronouns of this and the following verses; and their criticisms have been confirmed by a great number of MSS. since collated. The text corrected reads thus: "And I said I will reveal this to thy ear, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, tell me, that I may know; for there is none to redeem it but thou, and I who am next to thee. And he said, I will redeem it. And Boaz said, In the day that thou redeemest the land from the hand of Naomi, thou wilt also acquire Ruth, the wife of the dead, that thou mayest raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance;" Ruth 4:4, 5. — See Kennicott's Dissertations, vol. i., p. 449; Houbigant in loco; and the *Variae Lectiones* of Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi. This is Boaz's statement of the case before the kinsman, and before the people and the elders.

***I will redeem it.*** I will pay down the money which it is worth. He knew not of the following condition.

**Verse 5. *Thou must buy it also of Ruth*** More properly, Thou wilt also acquire Ruth. Thou canst not get the land without taking the wife of the

deceased and then the children which thou mayest have shall be reputed the children of Mahlon, thy deceased kinsman.

**Verse 6. *I cannot redeem it for myself*** The Targum gives the proper sense of this passage: “And the kinsman said, On this ground I cannot redeem it, because I have a wife already; and I have no desire to take another, lest there should be contention in my house, and I should become a corrupter of my inheritance. Do thou redeem it, for thou hast no wife; for I cannot redeem it.” This needs no comment. But still the gloss of the Targum has no foundation in the law of Moses. See the law, Deuteronomy 25:5-9.

**Verse 7. *A man plucked off his shoe*** The law of such a case is given at large in Deuteronomy 25:5-9. It was simply this: If a brother, who had married a wife, died without children, the eldest brother was to take the widow, and raise up a family to the brother deceased; and he had a right to redeem the inheritance, if it had been alienated. But if the person who had the right of redemption would not take the woman, she was to pull off his shoe and spit in his face, and he was ever after considered as a disgraced man. In the present case the shoe only is taken off, probably because the circumstances of the man were such as to render it improper for him to redeem the ground and take Ruth to his wife; and because of this reasonable excuse, the contemptuous part of the ceremony is omitted. See the note on Deuteronomy 25:9.

**Verse 11. *We are witnesses.*** It is not very likely that any writing was drawn up. There was an appeal made to the people then present, whether they had seen and understood the transaction; who answered, We have witnessed it. If any minutes of court were kept, then the transaction was entered probably in some such words as these: “On — day of —, Boaz bought the land of Elimelech from Naomi his widow, and took Ruth, her daughter-in-law, to wife; —, who had the nearest right, refusing to buy the land on the conditions then proposed.”

***The Lord make this woman-like Rachel and like Leah*** May thy family be increased by her means, as the tribes were formed by means of Rachel and Leah, wives of the patriarch Jacob!



**Which two did build the house of Israel** We have already seen that **בן** ben, a son, comes from the root **בנה** banah, he built; and hence **בן** eben, a stone, because as a house is built of stones, so is a family of children. There is a similar figure in PLAUTUS, Mostell. Act i., sec. 2, ver. 37.

— *Nunc etiam volo Dicere,  
ut homines aedium esse similes arbitremini.  
Primum dum parentes fabri liberum sunt,  
Et fundamentum liberorum substruunt.*

“I would also observe, that ye men are similar to houses; ye parents are the fabricators of the children, and they are the foundation of the building.”

**Verse 12. Like the house of Pharez** This was very appropriate; for from Pharez, the son of Judah, by Tamar, came the family of the Beth-lehemites and that of Elimelech.

**Verse 13. So Boaz took Ruth** The law of Moses had prohibited the Moabites, even to the tenth generation, from entering into the congregation of the Lord; but this law, the Jews think, did not extend to women; and even if it had, Ruth’s might be considered an exempt case, as she had been already incorporated into the family by marriage; and left her own country, people, and gods, to become a proselyte to the true God in the land of Israel.

**Verse 16. Naomi took the child** This might do for Naomi, but it was bad for the child. A child, unless remarkably healthy and robust, will suffer considerably by being nursed by an old woman, especially if the child sleep with her. The aged gain refreshment and energy by sleeping with the young; and from the same means the young derive premature decrepitude. The vigor which is absorbed by the former is lost by the latter. It is a foolish and destructive custom to permit young children, which is a common case, to sleep with aged aunts and old grandmothers. Bacon’s grand secret of the cure of old age, couched in so many obscure and enigmatical terms, is simply this: Let young persons sleep constantly with those who are aged and infirm. And it was on this principle that the physicians of David recommended a young healthy girl to sleep with David in his old age. They well knew that the aged infirm body of the king would absorb a considerable portion of healthy energy from the young woman.

**Verse 17. *The neighbors gave it a name*** That is, they recommended a name suitable to the circumstances of the case; and the parents and grandmother adopted it.

***They called his name Obed*** עֹבֵד obed, serving, from עָבַד abad, he served. Why was this name given? Because he was to be the nourisher of her old age, Ruth 4:15. And so he must be by lying in her bosom, even if services in future life were wholly left out of the question. These neighbors of Naomi were skillful people. See on Ruth 4:16. Other meanings, of which I am not ignorant, have been derived from these words; those who prefer them have my consent.

***He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.*** And for the sake of this conclusion, to ascertain the line of David, and in the counsel of God to fix and ascertain the line of the Messiah was this instructive little book written.

**Verse 18. *Now these are the generations*** The Targum gives a copious paraphrase on this and the following verses, I shall insert the principal parts in their proper places.

**Verse 19. *Hezron begat Ram*** He is called Aram here by the Septuagint, and also by St. Matthew, Matthew 1:3.

**Verse 20. *Amminadab begat Nahshon*** The Targum adds, “And Nahshon was chief of the house of his father in the tribe of Judah.”

***Nahshon begat Salmon*** In the Hebrew it is שַׁלְמָה Salmah, which Houbigant thinks was an error of an ancient scribe, before any final letters were acknowledged in the Hebrew alphabet: for then the word would be written שַׁלְמוֹ Salmon, which a scribe, after final letters were admitted, might mistake for שַׁלְמָה Salmah, and so write it, instead of שַׁלְמוֹ Salmon, the וּ vau and final nun in conjunction (וּ) bearing some resemblance to הֵה.

The Targum calls him “Salmah the Just; he was the Salmah of Beth-lehem and Netopha, whose sons abolished the watches which Jeroboam set over the highways; and their works and the works of their father were good in Netopha.”

**Verse 21. *And Salmon begat Boaz*** The Targum goes on, “And Salmon begat Absan the judge; he is Boaz the Just, on account of whose righteousness the people of the house of Israel were redeemed from the hands of their enemies; and at whose supplication the famine departed from the land of Israel.”

***And Boaz begat Obed*** “Who served the Lord in this world with a perfect heart.”

**Verse 22. *And Obed begat Jesse*** “Who,” says the Targum, “also is called Nachash, נחש because neither iniquity nor corruption was found in him, that he should be delivered into the hands of the angel of death, that he might take away his soul from him. And he lived many days until the counsel was remembered before the Lord, that the serpent gave to Eve the wife of Adam, that she should eat of the tree; by eating of the fruit of which they became wise, to distinguish between good and evil: and by that counsel all the inhabitants of the earth became guilty of death; and by this iniquity Jesse the Just died.” Here is no mean or indistinct reference to the doctrine of original sin: and it shows us, at least, what the very ancient rabbins thought on the subject. I should observe that these additions are taken from the London Polyglot; they are not found in that of Antwerp; but they are the same that appear in the Targum of the great Bible printed by Bomberg, at Venice, in 1547-49.

***And Jesse begat David*** To this no comment is added by the Targumist, as the history of this king is found in the following book.

The ten persons whose genealogy is recorded in the five last verses, may be found, with a trifling change of name, in the genealogical list in Matthew 1:3-6, as forming important links in the line of the Messiah. To introduce this appears to have been the principal object of the writer, as introductory to the following books, where the history of David, the regal progenitor and type of the Messiah, is so particularly detailed.

FOR the account of the birth of Pharez and his brother Zarah, the reader is requested to refer to Genesis 38:12-30, and to the notes there; and for several particulars in the genealogy itself, to the notes on Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38, where the wisdom, goodness, and providence of God, in the preservation of this line, are particularly noticed.

**MASORETIC NOTES ON RUTH**

Number of verses in Ruth is 85.

Middle verse is Ruth 2:21.

We have already seen that Archbishop Usher places the event mentioned here in A.M. 2686, about one hundred years after the conquest of Canaan.

## PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

**THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS**

THIS and the three following books were formerly termed the first, second, third, and fourth books of Kings, and the two books of Samuel made in ancient times but one; the separation which has taken place seems to have been done without reason or necessity. These books are, properly speaking, a continuation of the book of Judges, as they give us an account of the remaining judges of Israel, down to the election of Saul; and of all the kings of Israel and Judah to the Babylonish captivity.

Of this book, called the first book of Samuel, the following are the contents: The birth and education of Samuel; the high priesthood of Eli; the Philistines attack the Israelites, overthrow them with a terrible slaughter, take the ark of the Lord, and set it up in the temple of their god Dagon; they are visited with Divine judgments, and are obliged to send back the ark with offerings and presents; Samuel, long acknowledged as a prophet of the Lord, takes the government of the people. Under his wise and pious administration, the affairs of Israel become re-established, and the Philistines are subdued. The sons of Samuel, who principally administered the secular concerns of the kingdom, acting unworthily, the people desire to have a king, who should be supreme, both in civil and military affairs. Samuel, after expostulations, yields to their entreaties; and, under the direction of God, Saul the son of Kish, whilst seeking the lost asses of his

father, is met by the prophet, and anointed king over Israel. This man, not conducting himself in the government according to the direction of God, is rejected, and David the son of Jesse anointed king in his place, though Saul continues still in the government. This person soon becomes advantageously known to Israel by his single combat with a gigantic Philistine chief, called Goliath, whom he slays; on which the Israelites attack the Philistines, and give them a total overthrow. Saul, envious of David's popularity, seeks his destruction; he is in consequence obliged to escape for his life, and take refuge sometimes among the Moabites, sometimes among the Philistines, and sometimes in the caves of the mountains of Judah, everywhere pursued by Saul, and everywhere visibly protected by the Lord. At last Saul, being pressed by the Philistines, and finding that the Lord had forsaken him, had recourse to a witch that dwelt at En-dor, whom he consulted relative to the issue of the present war with the Philistines; he loses the battle, and being sorely wounded, and his three sons slain, he falls on his own sword, and expires on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines find his body, and the bodies of his three sons, among the slain; they cut off Saul's head, and affix the bodies to the walls of Beth-shan. The men of Jabesh-gilead, hearing this, go by night, and take the bodies from the walls of Beth-shan, bring them to Jabesh, burn them there, bury the bones, and mourn over their fallen king, fasting seven days. Thus concludes the first book of Samuel.

Concerning the author of these books there have been various conjectures. Because, in most of the Hebrew copies, they bear the name of Samuel, as a running title, it has been generally supposed that he was the author. But his name does not appear to have been anciently prefixed to these books, at least in those copies used by the Greek interpreters, commonly called the Septuagint, as they simply term each **βασιλειων**. The History or Book of Kingdoms. The Chaldee has no inscription. The Syriac and Arabic call each The Book of Samuel the Prophet; and the Vulgate, The Book of Samuel, simply. The Jews, in general, believe that Samuel is the author of the first twenty-seven chapters of this book, which contain the history of his own life and government, and what respects Saul and David during that time. The remaining four chapters they suppose were added by the prophets Gad and Nathan. This opinion is founded on what is said 1 Chronicles 29:29: Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold

they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer. Others suppose the books to be more recent than the persons already named, but that they were compiled out of their memoirs.

But who was the compiler? Some of the most learned among the Jews suppose it to have been Jeremiah the prophet, and that the style bears a near resemblance to his prophecies. That they were the work of a more recent author than Samuel, etc., Grotius thinks evident from this circumstance, that the names of the months are comparatively modern, and were not known among the ancient Jews. Others have attributed them to David; others, to Hezekiah; and others, to Ezra the scribe, on his return from the Babylonish captivity.

Calmet's opinion is as probable as any, viz., "That these books were written by the same hand, though composed out of the memoirs left by persons of that time; and that the compiler has generally used the same terms he found in those memoirs, adding here and there something of his own by way of illustration." The equality of the style, the frequent eulogiums on the character of Samuel, the connection of the materials, particular quotations, and remarks on certain events, are, he thinks, proofs sufficiently clear of what he assumes. These books contain remarks or expressions which could only proceed from a contemporary author, and others which are evidences of a much later age.

1. For instance, we read, 1 Samuel 3:1, The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision; i.e., in the days of Eli, the high priest: hence it is evident that the author lived in times in which prophecy was more common; which, in fact, it was after Samuel, under David, and the succeeding kings of Israel and Judah.

2. Again, in the time of the author of this book, Beth-el was called Beth-aven, 1 Samuel 13:5, which name was given to it in derision after Jeroboam had placed there his golden calves.

3. Again, it is said, 1 Samuel 6:18, that the ark of the Lord was set down in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite, where it remained to the time of this author; and yet, in 1 Samuel 7:15, he speaks of Samuel as being already dead: And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

4. It is not natural to suppose that Samuel would have spoken of himself as is done 1 Samuel 2:26: And the child Samuel grew, and was in favor both with the Lord and with men; but if he were dead when this book was written, any author might have added this with the strictest propriety.

5. In 1 Samuel 27:6, it is said that Achish gave Ziklag to David, Wherefore Ziklag pertaineth to the kings of Judah unto this day. This is a proof that when this book was written the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were separated; and that, although the tribe of Simeon belonged to the kings of Israel, yet Ziklag, which was in that tribe, remained in the hands of the kings of Judah.

Here, therefore, are proofs that this book contains matters which must have been written by a contemporary author; and others which could not have been inserted but in times much posterior. These seeming contradictions are reconciled by the hypothesis that the books were compiled, by a comparatively recent author, out of materials of a much earlier date, the author not changing many of the expressions which he found in those ancient documents.

Several other proofs might be here adduced to support this opinion; but as the reader will find them noticed in the places where they occur, it is not necessary to repeat them here. Those who wish to see the subject farther discussed, may consult Calmet. We may rest satisfied with these three things: 1. That the books of Samuel were constructed out of original and authentic documents. 2. That the compiler was not contemporary with the facts he narrates. And, 3. That both the author and time in which he compiled his history, though comparatively more recent than the facts themselves, are nevertheless both uncertain.



# THE FIRST BOOK

OF

# SAMUEL

- Year from the Creation, 2833.
- Year before the Incarnation, 1171.
- Year before the first Olympiad, 395.
- Year before the building of Rome, 418.
- Year of the Julian Period, 3543.
- Year of the Dionysian Period, 351.
- Cycle of the Sun, 15.
- Cycle of the Moon, 9.

## CHAPTER 1

*Some account of Elkanah and his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah, 1, 2. His annual worship at Shiloh and the portions he gave at such times to his wives, 3-5. Hannah, being barren, is reproached by Peninnah, especially in their going up to Shiloh; at which she is sorely grieved, 6, 7. Elkanah comforts her, 8. Her prayer and vow in the temple, that if God would give her a son, she would consecrate him to His service, 9-11. Eli, the high priest, indistinctly hearing her pray, charges her with being drunk, 12-14. Her defense of her conduct, 15, 16. Eli, undeceived, blesses her; on which she takes courage, 17, 18. Hannah and Elkanah return home; she conceives, bears a son, and calls him Samuel, 19, 20. Elkanah and his family go again to Shiloh to worship; but Hannah stays at home to nurse her child, purposing, as soon as he is weaned, to go and offer him to the Lord, according to her vow, 21-23. When weaned, she takes him to Shiloh, presents her child to Eli to be consecrated to the Lord, and offers three bullocks, an ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, for his consecration, 24-28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. *Ramathaim-zophim*** Literally, the two high places of the watchman; these were, no doubt, two contiguous hills, on which watchtowers were built, and in which watchmen kept continual guard for the safety of the country and which afterwards gave name to the place.

**Verse 2. *He had two wives*** The custom of those times permitted polygamy; but wherever there was more than one wife, we find the peace of the family greatly disturbed by it.

***The name of the one was Hannah*** חַנָּה Channah, which signifies fixed or settled, and the other פְּנִינָה Peninnah, which signifies a jewel or pearl.

**Verse 3. *Went up out of his city yearly to worship*** As the ark was at Shiloh, there was the temple of God, and thither all the males were bound

by the law to go once a year, on each of the great national festivals: viz., the passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles.

**The Lord of hosts** יהוה צבאות Yehovah tsebaoth, Jehovah of armies. As all the heavenly bodies were called the hosts of heaven, צבא השמים tseba hashshamayim, Jehovah being called Lord of this host showed that he was their Maker and Governor; and consequently He, not they, was the proper object of religious worship. The sun, moon, planets, and stars, were the highest objects of religious worship to the heathens in general. The Jewish religion, teaching the knowledge of a Being who was the Lord of all these, showed at once its superiority to all that heathenism could boast. This is the first place where Lord of hosts is mentioned in the Bible; and this is so much in the style of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., that it gives some weight to the supposition that this book was written by a person who lived in or after the times of these prophets. See the preface.

**Verse 4. He gave-portions** The sacrifices which were made were probably peace-offerings, of which the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar; the fat was burnt on the fire; the breast and right shoulder were the portion of the priest, and the rest belonged to him who made the offering; on it he and his family feasted, each receiving his portion; and to these feasts God commands them to invite the Levite, the poor, the widow, and the orphan, Deuteronomy 16:11.

**Verse 5. Unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion** The Hebrew here is very obscure, ית מנה אחת אפים yitten manah achath appayim; he gave her one portion of two faces; which the Syriac renders, he gave her one DOUBLE PART; and the Chaldee, he gave her one CHOSEN part; the Arabic is nearly the same; the Vulgate Annae autem dedit unam partem tristis, but to Anna he being sorrowful gave one part. As the shew-bread that was presented to the Lord was called לחם פנים lechem panim, the bread of faces, because it was placed before the face or appearances of the Lord; probably this was called מנה אפים manah appayim, because it was the portion that belonged to, or was placed before, the person who had offered the sacrifice. On this ground it might be said that Elkanah gave Hannah his own portion or a part of that which was placed before himself. Whatever it was, it was intended as a proof of his especial love to her; for, it is added, he loved Hannah.

**Verse 6. *And her adversary*** That is, Peninnah.

***Provoked her sore*** Was constantly striving to irritate and vex her, to make her fret-to make her discontented with her lot, because the Lord had denied her children.

**Verse 7. *And as he did so year by year*** As the whole family went up to Shiloh to the annual festivals, Peninnah had both sons and daughters to accompany her, 1 Samuel 1:4, but Hannah had none; and Peninnah took this opportunity particularly to twit Hannah with her barrenness, by making an ostentatious exhibition of her children.

***Therefore she wept*** She was greatly distressed, because it was a great reproach to a woman among the Jews to be barren; because, say some, every one hoped that the Messiah should spring from her line.

**Verse 8. *Amos not I better to thee than ten sons?*** TEN, a certain for an uncertain number. Is not my especial affection to thee better than all the comfort thou couldst gain, even from a numerous family?

**Verse 9. *Eli-sat upon a seat*** **עַל הַכִּסֵּא** al hakkisse, upon the throne, i.e., of judgment; for he was then judge of Israel.

***By a post of the temple of the Lord.*** I think this is the first place where **הַיְחָל יְהוָה** heychal Yehovah, “temple of Jehovah,” is mentioned. This gives room for a strong suspicion that the books of Samuel were not compiled till the first temple was built, or after the days of Solomon. After this the word temple is frequent in the books of Kings, Chronicles, and in the prophets. Perhaps those Psalms in which this word occurs were, like many others in the Psalms, not of David’s composition; some of them were evidently made long after his time.

**Verse 11. *I will give him unto the Lord*** Samuel, as a descendant of the house of Levi, was the Lord’s property from twenty-five years of age till fifty; but the vow here implies that he should be consecrated to the Lord from his infancy to his death, and that he should not only act as a Levite, but as a Nazarite, on whose head no razor should pass.

**Verse 13. *Spake in her heart; only her lips moved*** She prayed; her whole heart was engaged: and though she spake not with an audible voice, yet her

lips formed themselves according to the pronunciation of the words which her heart uttered.

**Verse 15. *I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink*** Neither wine nor inebriating drink has been poured out unto me; but I have poured out my soul unto the Lord. There is a great deal of delicacy and point in this vindication.

**Verse 16. *Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial*** בליעל אל תת את אמתך לפני בת

Beliyael; ‘Put not thy handmaiden before the faces of a daughter of Belial.’ “If I am a drunkard, and strive by the most execrable hypocrisy (praying in the house of God) to cover my iniquity, then I am the chief of the daughters of Belial.” Or, “Give not thy handmaid {to reproach} before the faces of the daughters of Belial.” Several of these probably attended there for the purposes of prostitution and gain; for it is said, 1 Samuel 2:22, that Eli’s sons lay with the women at the door of the tabernacle, though this may refer to the women who kept the door.

**Verse 17. *Grant thee thy petition*** He was satisfied he had formed a wrong judgment, and by it had added to the distress of one already sufficiently distressed.

The fact that Eli supposed her to be drunken, and the other of the conduct of Eli’s sons already mentioned, prove that religion was at this time at a very low ebb in Shiloh; for it seems drunken women did come to the place, and lewd women were to be found there.

**Verse 18. *Let thine handmaid find grace*** Continue to think favorably of me, and to pray for me.

**Verse 20. *Called his name Samuel*** As she gave this name to her son because she had asked him of the Lord, the word שמואל Shemuel must be here considerably contracted; if it express this sentiment, the component parts of it are the following: שאול מאל shaul meEl, “asked of God.’ This name would put both the mother and the son in continual remembrance of the Divine interposition at his birth. See on 1 Samuel 1:28.

**Verse 21. *The man Elkanah and all his house*** He and the whole of his family, Hannah and her child excepted, who purposed not to go up to Shiloh till her son was old enough to be employed in the Divine service.

***And his vow*** Probably he had also made some vow to the Lord on the occasion of his wife's prayer and vow; in which, from his love to her, he could not be less interested than herself.

**Verse 23. *Until thou have weaned him*** On the nature of this weaning, and the time in which it was usually done, the reader will be pleased to refer to the note on Genesis 21:8.

***The Lord establish his word.*** Or, may the Lord establish his word—preserve the child, cause him to grow up, and make him a blessing to Israel.

**Verse 24. *With three bullocks*** The Septuagint, the Syriac, and the Arabic, read, a bullock of three years old; and this is probably correct, because we read, 1 Samuel 1:25, that they slew **הַפָּר אֶת** eth happar, THE bullock. We hear of no more, and we know that a bullock or heifer of three years old was ordinarily used, see Genesis 15:9.

***One ephah of flour*** Seven gallons and a half.

***A bottle of wine*** **נֶבֶל יַיִן** nebel yayin, a skin full of wine. Their bottles for wine and fluids in general were made out of skins of goats, stripped off without being cut up; the places whence the legs were extracted sewed up, as also the lower part; and the top tied. See the notes on Genesis 21:14, and Matthew 9:17. These three things, the ox, the flour, and the wine, probably constituted the consecration-offering.

**Verse 26. *As thy soul liveth*** As sure as thou art a living soul, so surely am I the person who stood by thee here praying.

**Verse 28. *Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord*** There is here a continual reference to her vow, and to the words which she used in making that vow.

The word Samuel, as we have already seen, is a contraction of the words **שְׂאוּל מֵאֵל** Shaul meEl, that is, asked or lent of God; for his mother said, 1 Samuel 1:27, The Lord hath given me my petition, which **שְׂאֵלֹתַי**

SHAALTI, I ASKED of him. In 1 Samuel 1:28 she says: **הוּא שָׁאֵל לַיהוָה** hu SHAUL layhouah, he shall be LENT unto the Lord: here we find the verb is the same; and it is remarked by grammarians that **שָׁאֵל** shaal, he asked, making in the participle pahul **שָׁאֵל** shaul, ASKED, in the conjugation hiphil signifies to lend; therefore, says his mother, 1 Samuel 1:28, **לַיהוָה הִשְׁאֵלְתִּי הוּא** HISHILTIHU layhovah, I have LENT him to the Lord. This twofold meaning of the Hebrew root is not only followed by our translators, but also by the Vulgate, Septuagint, and Syriac.

*And he worshipped the Lord there.* Instead of **וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה** vaiyishtachu, HE worshipped, **וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ** vaiyishtachavu, and THEY worshipped, is the reading of six of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., of some copies of the Septuagint, and of the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic.

This and the following chapter are connected in most copies of the Septuagint and Vulgate thus: And Anna worshipped, and said, My soul is strengthened in the Lord, etc. It is very likely that the whole passage, from the beginning of ver. 26 to the end of ver. 10 of the ensuing chapter, { 1 Samuel 1:26-2:10, } contains the words of Hannah alone; and that even the clause, He worshipped the Lord there, should be, And she worshipped the Lord there, and prayed, and said, etc. Indeed this latter clause is wanting in the Polyglot Septuagint, as I have stated above.

## CHAPTER 2

*Hannah's prophetic hymn, 1-10. Samuel ministers to the Lord, 11. The abominable conduct of Eli's sons, 12-17. Farther account of Samuel, and of the Divine blessing on Elkanah and Hannah, 18-21. Eli's reprehensible remissness towards his sons in not restraining them in their great profligacy, 22-26. The message of God to Eli, and the prophecy of the downfall of his family, and slaughter of his wicked sons Hophni and Phinehas, 27-36.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1.** *And Hannah prayed, and said* The Chaldee very properly says, And Hannah prayed in the spirit of prophecy; for indeed the whole of this prayer, or as it may be properly called oracular declaration, is a piece of regular prophecy, every part of it having respect to the future, and perhaps not a little-of it declaratory oil the Messiah's kingdom.

Dr. Hales has some very good observations on this prophetic song.

“This admirable hymn excels in simplicity of composition, closeness of connection, and uniformity of sentiment; breathing the pious effusions of a devout mind, deeply impressed with a conviction of God's mercies to herself in particular, and of his providential government of the world in general; exalting the poor in spirit or the humble-minded, and abasing the rich and the arrogant; rewarding the righteous, and punishing the wicked. Hannah was also a prophetess of the first class, besides predicting her own fruitfulness, 1 Samuel 2:5, (for she bore six children in all, 1 Samuel 2:21,) she foretold not only the more immediate judgments of God upon the Philistines during her son's administration, 1 Samuel 2:10, but his remoter judgments ‘upon the ends of the earth,’ 1 Samuel 2:10, in the true spirit of the prophecies of Jacob, Balaam, and Moses. Like them, she describes the promised Savior of the world as a KING, before there was any king in Israel; and she first applied to him the remarkable epithet MESSIAH in Hebrew, CHRIST in Greek, and ANOINTED in English, which was adopted by David, Nathan, Ethan, Isaiah, Daniel, and the succeeding prophets of



the Old Testament; and by the apostles and inspired writers of the New. And the allusion thereto by Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, in his hymn, Luke 1:69, where he calls Christ a ‘horn of salvation,’ and the beautiful imitation of it by the blessed Virgin throughout in her hymn, Luke 1:46-55, furnishing the finest commentary thereon, clearly prove that Hannah in her rejoicing had respect to something higher than Peninnah her rival, or to the triumphs of Samuel, or even of David himself; the expressions are too magnificent and sublime to be confined to such objects. Indeed the learned rabbi, David Kimchi, was so struck with them that he ingenuously confessed that ‘the King of whom Hannah speaks is the MESSIAH,’ of whom she spake either by prophecy or tradition; for, continues he, ‘there was a tradition among the Israelites, that a great king should arise in Israel; and she seals up her song with celebrating this King who was to deliver them from all their enemies.’ The tradition, as we have seen, was founded principally on Balaam’s second and third prophecies, Numbers 24:7-17; and we cannot but admire that gracious dispensation of spiritual gifts to Hannah (whose name signifies grace) in ranking her among the prophets who should first unfold a leading title of the blessed Seed of the woman.”

In the best MSS. the whole of this hymn is written in hemistich or poetic lines. I shall here produce it in this order, following the plan as exhibited in Kennicott’s Bible, with some trifling alterations of our present version:—

**Ver. 1.** My heart exulteth in Jehovah; My horn is exalted in Jehovah. My mouth is incited over mine enemies, For I have rejoiced in thy salvation.

**Ver. 2.** There is none holy like Jehovah, For there is none besides thee; There is no rock like our God.

**Ver. 3.** Do not magnify yourselves, speak not proudly, proudly. Let not prevarication come out of your mouth; For the God of knowledge is Jehovah, And by him actions are directed.

**Ver. 4.** The bows of the heroes are broken, And the tottering are girded with strength.

**Ver. 5.** The full have hired out themselves for bread, And the famished cease for ever. The barren hath borne seven, And she who had many children is greatly enfeebled.

**Ver. 6.** Jehovah killeth, and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

**Ver. 7.** Jehovah maketh poor, and maketh rich; He bringeth down, and he even exalteth.

**Ver. 8.** He lifteth up the poor from the dust; From the dunghill he exalteth the beggar, To make him sit with the nobles, And inherit the throne of glory. For to Jehovah belong the pillars of the earth, And upon them he hath placed the globe.

**Ver. 9.** The foot of his saints he shall keep, And the wicked shall be silent in darkness; For by strength shall no man prevail.

**Ver. 10.** Jehovah shall bruise them who contend with him; Upon them shall be thunder in the heavens. Jehovah shall judge the ends of the earth; And he shall give strength to his King. And shall exalt the horn of his Messiah.

It is not particularly stated here when Hannah composed or delivered this hymn; it appears from the connection to have been at the very time in which she dedicated her son to God at the tabernacle, though some think that she composed it immediately on the birth of Samuel. The former sentiment is probably the most correct.

*Mine horn is exalted in the Lord* We have often seen that horn signifies power, might, and dominion. It is thus constantly used in the Bible, and was so used among the heathens. The following words of Horace to his jar are well known, and speak a sentiment very similar to that above:—

*Tu spem reducis mentibus anxiiis,  
Viresque et addis CORNUA pauperi.*

*Hor. Odar. lib. iii., Od. 21, v. 18.*

Thou bringest back hope to desponding minds; And thou addest strength and horns to the poor man.

Paraphrastically expressed by Mr. Francis:—

*“Hope, by thee, fair fugitive,  
Bids the wretched strive to live.  
To the beggar you dispense  
Heart and brow of confidence.”*”

In which scarcely any thing of the meaning is preserved.

***My mouth is enlarged*** My faculty of speech is incited, stirred up, to express God’s disapprobation against my adversaries.

**Verse 2. *None holy*** HOLINESS is peculiar to the God of Israel; no false god ever pretended to holiness; it was no attribute of heathenism, nor of any religion ever professed in the world before or since the true revelation of the true God.

***There is none beside thee*** There can be but one unoriginated, infinite, and eternal Being; that Being is Jehovah.

***Any rock like our God.*** Rabbi Maimon has observed that the word צור **צור** tsur, which we translate rock, signifies, when applied to Jehovah, fountain, source, spring. There is no source whence continual help and salvation can arise but our God.

**Verse 3. *A God of knowledge*** He is the most wise, teaching all good, and knowing all things.

***Actions are weighed*** נחכנו **נחכנו** nithkenu, they are directed; it is by his counsel alone that we can successfully begin, continue, or end, any work.

**Verse 4. *The bows of the mighty*** The Targum considers the first verse as including a prophecy against the Philistines; the second verse, against Sennacherib and his army; the third, against Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans; the fourth, against the Greeks; the fifth, against Haman and his posterity; and the tenth, against Magog, and the enemies of the Messiah.

**Verse 5. *They that were full*** All the things mentioned in these verses frequently happen in the course of the Divine providence; and indeed it is the particular providence of God that Hannah seems more especially to celebrate through the whole of this simple yet sublime ode.

**Verse 6. *The Lord killeth*** God is the arbiter of life and death; he only can give life, and he only has a right to take it away.

***He bringeth down to the grave*** The Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל sheol, which we translate grave, seems to have the same meaning in the Old Testament with ἄδης, hades in the New, which is the word generally used by the Septuagint for the other. It means the grave, the state of the dead, and the invisible place, or place of separate spirits. Sometimes we translate it hell, which now means the state of perdition, or place of eternal torments; but as this comes from the Saxon (Anglo-Saxon), to cover or conceal, it means only the covered place. In some parts of England the word helling is used for the covers of a book, the slating of a house, etc. The Targum seems to understand it of death and the resurrection. “He kills and commands to give life; he causes to descend into Sheol, that in the time to come he may bring them into the lives of eternity,” i.e., the life of shame and everlasting contempt, and the life of glory.

**Verse 7. *The Lord maketh poor*** For many cannot bear affluence, and if God should continue to trust them with riches, they would be their ruin.

***Maketh rich*** Some he can trust, and therefore makes them stewards of his secular bounty.

**Verse 8. *To set them among princes*** There have been many cases where, in the course of God’s providence, a person has been raised from the lowest and most abject estate to the highest; from the plough to the imperial dignity: from the dungeon to the throne; from the dunghill to nobility. The story of Cincinnatus is well known; so is that of the patriarch Joseph; but there is one not less in point, that of Roushen Akhter, who was brought out of a dungeon, and exalted to the throne of Hindustan. On this circumstance the following elegant couplet was made:—

[A] [A]

*“He was a bright star, but now is become a moon,  
Joseph is taken from prison, and is become a king.”*

There is a play here on Roushen Akhter, which signifies a bright star; and there is an allusion to the history of the patriarch Joseph, because of the similarity of fortune between him and the Mohammedan prince.

**For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's** He is almighty, and upholds all things by the word of his power.

**Verse 9. He will keep the feet of his saints** He will order and direct all their goings, and keep them from every evil way.

**The wicked shall be silent in darkness** The Targum understands this of their being sent to the darkness of hell; they shall be slain.

**By strength shall no man prevail.** Because God is omnipotent, and no power can be successfully exerted against him.

**Verse 10. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken** Those who contend with him, מריביו meribaiu, by sinning against his laws, opposing the progress of his word, or persecuting his people.

**Shall judge the ends on the earth** His empire shall be extended over all mankind by the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, for to this the afterpart of the verse seems to apply: He shall give strength unto his king, and shall exalt the horn of his Christ, or, as the Targum says, משיחיה וירבוי מלכות viribbey malcuth Meshicheyh, “he shall multiply the kingdom of the Messiah.” Here the horn means spiritual as well as secular dominion.

After the clause, The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces, the Septuagint add the following words: μη καυχασθω ο φρονιμος εν τη φρονησει αυτου, κ. τ. λ. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom and let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glorieth rather glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth the Lord; and that he executeth judgment and righteousness in the midst of the earth. This is a very long addition, and appears to be taken from Jeremiah 9:23, but on collating the two places the reader will find the words to be materially different. This clause is wanting in the Complutensian Polyglot, but it is in the edition of Aldus, in that of Cardinal Caroffa, and in the Codex Alexandrinus.

**Verse 11. And Elkanah went to Ramah** Immediately after the 10th verse, the Septuagint add, και κατελιπεν αυτον εκει ενωπιον κυριου· και απηλθεν εις αραματαια, And she left him there before the Lord, and went unto Arimathea. Thus the Septuagint suppose that the

song of Hannah was composed when she brought Samuel to present him to the Lord; and as soon as she had completed this fine ode, she delivered him into the hands of Eli the high priest, and the child entered immediately on his ministration, under the direction and instructions of Eli.

**Verse 12. *The sons of Eli were sons of Belial*** They were perverse, wicked, profligate men; devil's children. They knew not the Lord.

“THEY know! nor would an angel show Him; They would not know, nor choose to know Him.”

These men were the principal cause of all the ungodliness of Israel. Their most execrable conduct, described 1 Samuel 2:13-17, caused the people to abhor the Lord's offering. An impious priesthood is the grand cause of the transgressions and ruin of any nation; witness France, Germany, Spain, Ac., from 1792 to 1814.

**Verse 13. *When any man offered sacrifice*** That is, when a peace-offering was brought, the right shoulder and the breast belonged to the priest, the fat was burnt upon the altar, and the blood was poured at the bottom of the altar; the rest of the flesh belonged to the offerer. Under pretense of taking only their own part, they took the best of all they chose, and as much as they chose.

**Verse 14. *Kettle-caldron, or pot*** We know not what these were, nor of what capacity; nor is it of any consequence.

**Verse 15. *Before they burnt the fat*** They would serve themselves before GOD was served! This was iniquity and arrogance of the first magnitude.

***He will not have sodden flesh*** He chooses roast meat, not boiled; and if they had it in the pot before the servant came, he took it out that it might be roasted.

**Verse 17. *Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great*** That is, Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli.

***Men abhorred the offering*** As the people saw that the priests had no piety, and that they acted as if there was no God; they despised God's service, and became infidels.

A national priesthood, when the foundation is right, may be a great blessing; but if the priesthood becomes corrupt, though the foundation itself stand sure, the corruption of the national manners will be the unavoidable consequence.

**Verse 18. *Girded with a linen ephod*** This the Targum translates דבוץ אסיר כרדוט asir cardut debuts, “Girded with a cardit of byssus, or fine linen.” The word cardut they seem to have borrowed from the Greek χειριδωτος, a tunic, having χειριδας, i.e., sleeves that came down to, or covered, the hands. This was esteemed an effeminate garment among the Romans. See Buxtorf’s Talmudic Lexicon.

**Verse 19. *Made him a little coat*** מעיל קט meil katon, a little cloak, or surtout, an upper garment: probably intended to keep him from the cold, and to save his other clothes from being abused in his meaner services. It is probable that she furnished him with a new one each year, when she came up to one of the annual sacrifices.

**Verse 20. *Eli blessed Elkanah*** The natural place of this verse seems to be before the 11th; after which the 21st should come in; after the 21st, perhaps the 26th should come in. {1 Samuel 2:11, 21, 26.} The subjects in this chapter seem very much entangled and confused by the wrong position of the verses.

**Verse 22. *They lay with the women that assembled*** It is probable that these were persons who had some employment about the tabernacle. See the note on Exodus 38:8, where the Hebrew text is similar to that in this place.

**Verse 23. *Why do ye such things!*** Eli appears to have been a fondly affectionate, easy father, who wished his sons to do well, but did not bring them under proper discipline, and did not use his authority to restrain them. As judge, he had power to cast them immediately out of the vineyard, as wicked and unprofitable servants; this he did not, and his and their ruin was the consequence.

**Verse 25. *If one man sin against another*** All differences between man and man may be settled by the proper judge; but if a man sin against the Supreme Judge, God himself, who shall reconcile him to his Maker? Your

sin is immediately against God himself, and is the highest insult that can be offered, because it is in the matter of his own worship, therefore ye may expect his heaviest judgments.

***But if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?*** This was a question of the most solemn importance under the old covenant, especially after the death of Moses, the mediator. The law had determined what sins should be punished with death; and it was supposed that there was not any appeal from the decision there pronounced. 1 John 2:1 is an answer to this question; but it is an answer which the Gospel alone can give: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

***Because the Lord would slay them.*** The particle כִּי ki, which we translate because, and thus make their continuance in sin the effect of God's determination to destroy them, should be translated therefore, as it means in many parts of the sacred writings. See Noldius's Particles, where the very text in question is introduced: Sed non ausculturunt, etc., IDEO voluit Jehova eos interficere; "But they would not hearken, etc.; THEREFORE God purposed to destroy them." It was their not hearkening that induced the Lord to will their destruction.

***Verse 27. There came a man of God*** Who this was we know not, but the Chaldee terms him נְבִיאָה דַּי nebiya daya, a prophet of Jehovah.

***Unto the house of thy father*** That is, to Aaron; he was the first high priest; the priesthood descended from him to his eldest son Eleazar, then to Phinehas. It became afterwards established in the younger branch of the family of Aaron; for Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son. From Eli it was transferred back again to the family of Eleazar, because of the profligacy of Eli's sons.

***Verse 28. And did I choose him*** The high priesthood was a place of the greatest honor that could be conferred on man, and a place of considerable emolument; for from their part of the sacrifices they derived a most comfortable livelihood.

***Verse 29. Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice*** They disdained to take the part allowed by law; and would take for themselves what part they



pleased, and as much as they pleased, 1 Samuel 2:13-16: thus they kicked at the sacrifices.

**Honourest thy sons above me** Permitting them to deal, as above, with the offerings and sacrifices, and take their part before the fat, etc., was burnt unto the Lord: thus they were first served. At this Eli connived, and thus honored his sons above God.

**Verse 30. Should walk before me for ever** See Exodus 29:9; 40:15; Numbers 25:10-13, where it is positively promised that the priesthood should be continued in the family of Aaron FOR EVER. But although this promise appears to be absolute, yet we plainly see that, like all other apparently absolute promises of God, it is conditional, i.e., a condition is implied though not expressed.

**But now-be it far from me** You have walked unworthily; I shall annul my promise, and reverse my ordinance. See Jeremiah 18:9, 10.

**For them that honor me** This is a plan from which God will never depart; this can have no alteration; every promise is made in reference to it; “they who honor God shall be honored; they who despise him shall be lightly esteemed.”

**Verse 31. I will cut off thine arm** I will destroy the strength, power, and influence of thy family.

**Verse 32. Thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation** Every version and almost every commentator understands this clause differently. The word **אֹיֵב** tsar, which we translate an enemy, and the Vulgate aemulum, a rival, signifies calamity; and this is the best sense to understand it in here. The calamity which he saw was the defeat of the Israelites, the capture of the ark, the death of his wicked sons, and the triumph of the Philistines. All this he saw, that is, knew to have taken place, before he met with his own tragical death.

**In all the wealth which God shall give Israel** This also is dark. The meaning may be this: God has spoken good concerning Israel; he will, in the end, make the triumph of the Philistines their own confusion; and the capture of the ark shall be the desolation of their gods; but the Israelites shall first be sorely pressed with calamity. See the margin.

***There shall not be an old man*** This is repeated from the preceding verse, all the family shall die in the flower of their years, as is said in the following verse.

**Verse 33. *And the man of thine*** Of this passage Calmet observes: “The posterity of Eli possessed the high priesthood to the time of Solomon; and even when that dynasty was transferred to another family, God preserved that of Eli, not to render it more happy, but to punish it by seeing the prosperity of its enemies, to the end that it might see itself destitute and despised. This shows the depth of the judgments of God and the grandeur of his justice, which extends even to distant generations, and manifests itself to sinners both in life and death; both in their own disgrace, and in the prosperity of their enemies.”

**Verse 34. *They shall die both of them.*** Hophni and Phinehas were both killed very shortly after in the great battle with the Philistines in which the Israelites were completely routed, and the ark taken. See 1 Samuel 4:1-11.

**Verse 35. *A faithful priest*** This seems to have been spoken of Zadok, who was anointed high priest in the room of Abiathar, the last descendant of the house of Eli; see 1 Kings 2:26, 27. Abiathar was removed because he had joined with Adonijah, who had got himself proclaimed king; see 1 Kings 1:7.

***I will build him a sure house*** I will continue the priesthood in his family.

***He shall walk before mine Anointed*** He shall minister before Solomon, and the kings which shall reign in the land. The Targum says, “He shall walk **קדם משיחי** kodam Meshichi, before my MESSIAH,” and the Septuagint expresses it, **ενωπιον ξριστου μου**, “before my CHRIST; “ for, in their proper and more extended sense, these things are supposed to belong to our great High Priest and the Christian system: but the word may refer to the Israelitish people. See the note on Hebrews 9:26.

**Verse 36. *Shall come and crouch to him*** Shall prostrate himself before him in the most abject manner, begging to be employed even in the meanest offices about the tabernacle, in order to get even the most scanty means of support.

**A piece of silver** אגורת כסף agorath keseph, translated by the Septuagint, ὀβολου αργυριου, an obolus of silver. The Targum translates it מעא meā, which is the same as the Hebrew gerah, and weighed about sixteen grains of barley.

**A morsel of bread** A mouthful; what might be sufficient to keep body and soul together. See the sin and its punishment. They formerly pampered themselves, and fed to the full on the Lord's sacrifices; and now they are reduced to a morsel of bread. They fed themselves without fear; and now they have cleanness of teeth in all their dwellings. They wasted the Lord's heritage, and now they beg their bread!

IN religious establishments, vile persons, who have no higher motive, may and do get into the priest's office, that they may clothe themselves with the wool, and feed themselves with the fat, while they starve the flock. But where there is no law to back the claims of the worthless and the wicked, men of piety and solid merit only can find support; for they must live on the free-will offerings of the people. Where religion is established by law, the strictest ecclesiastical discipline should be kept up, and all hireling priests and ecclesiastical drones should be expelled from the Lord's vineyard. An established religion, where the foundation is good, as is ours, I consider a great blessing; but it is liable to this continual abuse, which nothing but careful and rigid ecclesiastical discipline can either cure or prevent. If our high priests, our archbishops and bishops, do not their duty, the whole body of the clergy may become corrupt or inefficient. If they be faithful, the establishment will be an honor to the kingdom, and a praise in the earth.

The words pillars of the earth, מצקי ארץ metsukey erets, Mr. Parkhurst translates and defends thus: "The compressors of the earth; i.e., the columns of the celestial fluid which compress or keep its parts together." This is all imaginary; we do not know this compressing celestial fluid; but there is one that answers the same end, which we do know, i.e., the AIR, the columns of which press upon the earth in all directions; above, below, around, with a weight of fifteen pounds to every square inch; so that a column of air of the height of the atmosphere, which on the surface of the globe measures one square inch, is known by the most accurate and indubitable experiments to weigh fifteen pounds. Now as a square foot

contains one hundred and forty-four square inches, each foot must be compressed with a weight of incumbent atmospheric air equal to two thousand one hundred and sixty pounds. And as the earth is known to contain a surface of five thousand five hundred and seventy-five billions of square feet; hence, allowing two thousand one hundred and sixty pounds to each square foot, the whole surface of the globe must sustain a pressure of atmospheric air equal to twelve trillions and forty-one thousand billions of pounds; or six thousand and twenty-one billions of tons. This pressure, independently of what is called gravity, is sufficient to keep all the parts of the earth together, and perhaps to counteract all the influence of centrifugal force. But adding to this all the influence of gravity or attraction, by which every particle of matter tends to the center, these compressors of the earth are sufficient to poise, balance, and preserve the whole terraqueous globe. These pillars or compressors are an astonishing provision made by the wisdom of God for the necessities of the globe. Without this, water could not rise in fountains, nor the sap in vegetables. Without this, there could be no respiration for man or beast, and no circulation of the blood in any animal. In short, both vegetable and animal life depend, under God, on these pillars or compressors of the earth; and were it not for this compressing power, the air contained in the vessels of all plants and animals would by its elasticity expand and instantly rupture all those vessels, and cause the destruction of all animal and vegetable life: but God in his wisdom has so balanced these two forces, that, while they appear to counteract and balance each other, they serve, by mutual dilations and compressions, to promote the circulation of the sap in vegetables, and the blood in animals.

## CHAPTER 3

*Samuel ministers to the Lord before Eli, 1. He is thrice called by the Lord; who informs him of the evils which shall be brought on the house of Eli, 2-15. Eli inquires of Samuel what the Lord had said, 16, 17. He gives a faithful reunion of the whole, which Eli receives with great submission, 18. Samuel prospers; is established as a prophet in Israel; and the Lord reveals himself to him to Shiloh, 19-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *Samuel ministered unto the Lord*** He performed minor services in the tabernacle, under the direction of Eli, such as opening the doors, etc. See 1 Samuel 3:15.

***The word of the Lord was precious*** There were but few revelations from God; and because the word was scarce, therefore it was valuable. The author of this book probably lived at a time when prophecy was frequent, See the preface.

***There was no open vision.*** There was no public accredited prophet; one with whom the secret of the Lord was known to dwell, and to whom all might have recourse in cases of doubt or public emergency.

**Verse 2. *Eli was laid down in his place*** It is very likely that as the ark was a long time at Shiloh, they had built near to it certain apartments for the high priest and others more immediately employed about the tabernacle. In one of these, near to that of Eli, perhaps under the same roof, Samuel lay when he was called by the Lord.

**Verse 3. *Ere the lamp of God went out*** Before sunrise; for it is likely that the lamps were extinguished before the rising of the sun. See Exodus 27:21; Leviticus 24:3.

**Verse 4. *The Lord called Samuel*** The voice probably came from the holy place, near to which Eli and Samuel were both lying.

**Verse 7. *Samuel did not yet know the Lord*** He had not been accustomed to receive any revelation from him. He knew and worshipped the God of Israel; but he did not know him as communicating especial revelation of His will.

**Verse 9. *Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth*** This was the usual way in which the prophets spoke, when they had intimations that the Lord was about to make some especial revelation.

**Verse 10. *The Lord cane, and stood*** He heard the voice as if it was approaching nearer and nearer; till at last, from the sameness of the tone, he could imagine that it ceased to approach: and this is what appears to be represented under the notion of God standing and calling.

**Verse 11. *The Lord said to Samuel*** He probably saw nothing, and only heard the voice; for it was not likely that any extraordinary representation could have been made to the eyes of a person so young. He heard a voice, but saw no similitude.

***The ears-shall tingle.*** It shall be a piercing word to all Israel; it shall astound them all; and, after having heard it, it will still continue to resound in their ears.

**Verse 12. *I will perform-all things which I have spoken*** That is, what He had declared by the prophet, whose message is related 1 Samuel 2:27, etc.

***When I begin, I will also make an end.*** I will not delay the execution of my purpose: when I begin, nothing shall deter me from bringing all my judgments to a conclusion.

**Verse 13. *I will judge his house for ever*** I will continue to execute judgments upon it till it is destroyed.

***His sons made themselves vile*** See 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25.

***He restrained them not.*** He did not use his parental and juridical authority to curb them, and prevent the disorders which they committed. See at the conclusion of the chapter.

**Verse 14. *Shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering*** That is, God was determined that they should be removed by a violent death. They had

committed the sin unto death; and no offering or sacrifice could prevent this. What is spoken here relates to their temporal death only.

**Verse 15. *Samuel feared to show Eli*** He revered him as a father, and he feared to distress him by showing what the Lord had purposed to do. It does not appear that God had commanded Samuel to deliver this message: he, therefore, did not attempt it till adjured by Eli, 1 Samuel 3:17.

**Verse 17. *God do so to thee, and more also*** This was a very solemn adjuration: he suspected that God had threatened severe judgments, for he knew that his house was very criminal; and he wished to know what God had spoken. The words imply thus much: If thou do not tell me fully what

**Was established to be a prophet** The word נָאֵם neeman, which we translate established, signifies faithful: The faithful Samuel was a prophet of the Lord.

**Verse 21. The Lord appeared again** וַיֹּסֵף יְהוָה לְהֵרָאֵה vaiyoseph Yehovah leheraoh, “And Jehovah added to appear; “ that is, he continued to reveal himself to Samuel at Shiloh.

**By the word of the Lord.** By the spirit and word of prophecy.

In this chapter we read again of the fearful consequences of a neglected religious education. Eli’s sons were wicked: their father knew the Lord; but he neither taught his children, nor restrained them by his parental authority. I have already had occasion to remark, that were a proper line of conduct pursued in the education of children, how few profligate sons and daughters, and how few broken-hearted parents should we find! The neglect of early religious education, connected with a wholesome and affectionate restraint, is the ruin of millions. Many parents, to excuse their indolence and most criminal neglect, say, “We cannot give our children grace.” What do they mean by this? That God, not themselves, is the author of the irregularities and viciousness of their children. They may shudder at this imputation: but when they reflect that they have not given them right precepts, have not brought them under firm and affectionate restraint; have not showed them, by their own spirit, temper, and conduct, how they should be regulated in theirs; when either the worship of God has not been established in their houses, or they have permitted their children, on the most trifling pretenses, to absent themselves from it; when all these things are considered, they will find that, speaking after the manner of men, it would have been a very extraordinary miracle indeed if the children had been found preferring a path in which they did not see their parents conscientiously tread. Let those parents who continue to excuse themselves by saying, “We cannot give grace to our children,” lay their hand on their conscience, and say whether they ever knew an instance where God withheld his grace, while they were, in humble subserviency to him, performing their duty. The real state of the case is this: parents cannot do God’s work, and God will not do theirs; but if they use the means, and train up the child in the way he should go, God will not withhold his blessing.



It is not parental fondness, nor parental authority, taken separately, that can produce this beneficial effect. A father may be as fond of his offspring as Eli, and his children be sons of Belial; he may be as authoritative as the grand Turk, and his children despise and plot rebellion against him. But let parental authority be tempered with fatherly affection; and let the rein of discipline be steadily held by this powerful but affectionate hand; and there shall the pleasure of God prosper; there will he give his blessing, even life for evermore. Many fine families have been spoiled, and many ruined, by the separate exercise of these two principles. Parental affection, when alone, infallibly degenerates into foolish fondness; and parental authority frequently degenerates into brutal tyranny when standing by itself. The first sort of parents will be loved without being respected; the second sort will be dreaded, without either respect or esteem. In the first case obedience is not exacted, and is therefore felt to be unnecessary, as offenses of great magnitude pass without punishment or reprehension: in the second case, rigid exaction renders obedience almost impossible; and the smallest delinquency is often punished with the extreme of torture, which, hardening the mind, renders duty a matter of perfect indifference.

Parents, lay these things to heart: remember Eli and his sons; remember the dismal end of both! Teach your children to fear God-use wholesome discipline-be determined-begin in time-mingle severity and mercy together in all your conduct-and earnestly pray to God to second your godly discipline with the power and grace of his Spirit.

Education is generally defined that series of means by which the human understanding is gradually enlightened, and the dispositions of the heart are corrected, formed, and brought forth, between early infancy and the period when a young person is considered as qualified to take a part in active life. Whole nations have been corrupted, enfeebled, and destroyed, through the want of proper education: through this multitudes of families have degenerated; and a countless number of individuals have come to an untimely end. Parents who neglect this, neglect the present and eternal interests of their offspring.

## CHAPTER 4

*A battle between Israel and the Philistines, in which the former are defeated, with the loss of four thousand men, 1, 2. They resolve to give the Philistines battle once more, and bring the ark of the Lord, with Hophni and Phinehas the priests, into the camp, 3, 4. They do so, and become vainly confident, 5. At this the Philistines are dismayed, 6-9. The battle commences; the Israelites are again defeated, with the loss of thirty thousand men; Hophni and Phinehas are among the slain; and the ark of the Lord is taken, 10, 11. A Benjamite runs with the news to Eli; who, hearing of the capture of the ark, falls from his seat, and breaks his neck, 12-18. The wife of Phinehas, hearing of the death of her husband, and father-in-law, and of the capture of the ark, is taken in untimely travail, begets a son, calls him I-chabod, and expires, 19-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1.** *The word of Samuel came to all Israel* This clause certainly belongs to the preceding chapter, and is so placed by the Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic.

*Pitched beside Eben-ezer* This name was not given to this place till more than twenty years after this battle, see 1 Samuel 7:12; for the monument called **הַאֵבֶן הָעֶזֶר** haeben haezer, the “Stone of Help,” was erected by Samuel in the place which was afterwards from this circumstance, called Eben-ezer, when the Lord had given the Israelites a signal victory over the Philistines. It was situated in the tribe of Judah, between Mizpeh and Shen, and not far from the Aphek here mentioned. This is another proof that this book was compiled after the times and transactions which it records, and probably from memoranda which had been made by a contemporary writer.

**Verse 2.** *Put themselves in array* There is no doubt that both the Philistines and Israelites had what might be called the art of war, according to which they marshalled their troops in the field, constructed their camps,

and conducted their retreats, sieges, etc.; but we know not the principles on which they acted.

***They slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.*** This must have been a severe conflict, as four thousand were left dead on the field of battle. The contest also must have lasted some considerable time, as these were all slain hand to hand; swords and spears being in all probability the only weapons then used.

**Verse 3. *Let us fetch the ark*** They vainly supposed that the ark could save them, when the God of it had departed from them because of their wickedness. They knew that in former times their fathers had been beaten by their enemies, when they took not the ark with them to battle; as in the case of their wars with the Canaanites, Numbers 14:44, 45; and that they had conquered when they took this with them, as in the case of the destruction of Jericho, Joshua 6:4. From the latter clause they took confidence; but the cause of their miscarriage in the former they laid not to heart. It was customary with all the nations of the earth to take their gods and sacred ensigns with them to war. The Persians, Indians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Philistines, etc., did so. Consecrated crosses, blessing and hallowing of colors and standards, are the modern remains of those ancient superstitions.

**Verse 4. *The Lord of hosts*** See on 1 Samuel 1:3.

***Dwelleth between the cherubims*** Of what shape the cherubim were, we know not; but there was one of these representative figures placed at each end of the ark of the covenant; and between them, on the lid or cover of that ark, which was called the propitiatory or mercy-seat, the shechinah, or symbol of the Divine presence, was said to dwell. They thought, therefore, if they had the ark, they must necessarily have the presence and influence of Jehovah.

**Verse 5. *All Israel shouted*** Had they humbled themselves, and prayed devoutly and fervently for success, they would have been heard and saved. Their shouting proved both their vanity and irreligion.

**Verse 7. *God is come into the camp.*** They took for granted, as did the Israelites, that his presence was inseparable from his ark or shrine.

**Verse 8. *These mighty Gods* מִיַּד הָאֱלֹהִים הַגְּדֹרִים** *miyad haelohim haaddirim*, from the hand of these illustrious Gods. Probably this should be translated in the singular, and not in the plural: Who shall deliver us from the hand of this illustrious God?

**Verse 9. *Be strong, etc.*** This was the address to the whole army, and very forcible it was. "If ye do not fight, and acquit yourselves like men, ye will be servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you; and you may expect that they will avenge themselves of you for all the cruelty you have exercised towards them."

**Verse 11. *Hophni and Phinehas were slain.*** They probably attempted to defend the ark, and lost their lives in the attempt.

**Verse 12. *Came to Shiloh the same day*** The field of battle could not have been at any great distance, for this young man reached Shiloh the same evening after the defeat.

***With his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.*** These were signs of sorrow and distress among all nations. The clothes rent, signified the rending, dividing, and scattering, of the people; the earth, or ashes on the head, signified their humiliation: "We are brought down to the dust of the earth; we are near to our graves." When the Trojan fleet was burnt, AENEAS is represented as tearing his robe from his shoulder, and invoking the aid of his gods:—

*Tum pius AENEAS humeris abscindere vestem,  
Auxilioque vocare Deos, et tendere palmas.  
VIRG. AEN. lib. v., ver. 685.*

*"The prince then tore his robes in deep despair,  
Raised high his hands, and thus address'd his prayer."  
PITT.*

We have a remarkable example in the same poet, where he represents the queen of King Latinus resolving on her own death, when she found that the Trojans had taken the city by storm:—

*Purpueros moritura manu discindit amictus.  
AEN. lib. xii., ver. 603.*

*She tears with both her hands her purple vest.*

But the image is complete in King Latinus himself, when he heard of the death of his queen, and saw his city in flames:—

— *It scissa veste Latinus, Conjugis attonitus fatis, urbisque ruina,  
Canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans. Ib., ver. 609.*

*Latinus tears his garments as he goes.  
Both for his public and his private woes:  
With filth his venerable beard besmears,  
And sordid dust deforms his silver hairs.*

DRYDEN.

We find the same custom expressed in one line by Catullus:—

*Canitiem terra, atque infuso pulvere foedans.*

EPITH. *Pelei et Thetidos, ver. 224.*

*Dishonoring her hoary locks with earth and sprinkled dust.*

The ancient Greeks in their mourning often shaved off their hair:—

τουτο νυ και γερας οιον οιζυροισι βροτοισι,  
κειρασθαι τε κομην, βαλειν τ' απο δακρυ παρειων.

HOM. *Odyss. lib. iv., ver. 197.*

*“Let each deplore his dead: the rites of wo  
Are all, alas! the living can bestow  
O'er the congenial dust, enjoin'd to shear  
The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.”*

POPE.

And again:—

καθμεν εν λεχεεσσι καθηραντες χροα καλον  
υδατι τε λιαρω και αλειφατι· πολλα δε σ' αμφισ δακρυα  
θερμα χεον δαναοι, κειροντο τε χαιτας.

*Ib., lib. xxiv., ver. 44.*

*“Then unguents sweet, and tepid streams, we shed;  
Tears flow’d from every eye; and o’er the dead  
Each clipp’d the curling honors of his head.”*

POPE.

The whole is strongly expressed in the case of Achilles, when he heard of the death of his friend Patroclus:—

ὡς φάτο· τον δ’ αχρεος νεφους νεφελη εκαλυψε μελαινα  
αμφοτερησι δε χερσιν ελων κονιν αοθαλοεσσαν,  
χευατο κακ κεφαλης, χαριεν δ’ ησχυνε προσωπον·  
νεκταρεω δε χιτωνι μελαιν’ αμφιζανε τεφρη.

Iliad, lib. xviii., ver. 22.

*“A sudden horror shot through all the chief,  
And wrapp’d his senses in the cloud of grief.  
Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread  
The scorching ashes o’er his graceful head:  
His purple garments, and his golden hairs.  
Those he deforms with dust, and these with tears.”*

POPE.

It is not unusual, even in Europe, and in the most civilized parts of it, to see grief expressed by tearing the hair, beating the breasts, and rending the garments; all these are natural signs, or expression of deep and excessive grief, and are common to all the nations of the world.

**Verse 13. *His heart trembled for the ark of God*** He was a most mild and affectionate father, and yet the safety of the ark lay nearer to his heart than the safety of his two sons. Who can help feeling for this aged, venerable man?

**Verse 17. *And the messenger answered*** Never was a more afflictive message, containing such a variety of woes, each rising above the preceding, delivered in so few words.

1. Israel is fled before the Philistines.

This was a sore evil: that Israel should turn their backs upon their enemies, was bad; and that they should turn their backs on such enemies as the

Philistines, was yet worse; for now they might expect the chains of their slavery to be strengthened and riveted more closely.

2. There hath also been a great slaughter among the people.

A rout might have taken place without any great previous slaughter; but in this case the field was warmly contested, thirty thousand were laid dead on the spot. This was a deeper cause of distress than the preceding; as if he had said, “The flower of our armies is destroyed; scarcely a veteran now to take the field.”

3. Thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead.

This was still more afflictive to him as a father, to lose both his sons, the only hope of the family; and to have them taken away by a violent death when there was so little prospect of their having died in the peace of God, was more grievous than all.

4. The ark of God is taken.

This was the most dreadful of the whole; now Israel is dishonored in the sight of the heathen, and the name of the Lord will be blasphemed by them. Besides, the capture of the ark shows that God is departed from Israel; and now there is no farther hope of restoration for the people, but every prospect of the destruction of the nation, and the final ruin of all religion! How high does each wo rise on the back of the preceding! And with what apparent art is this very laconic message constructed! And yet, probably, no art at all was used, and the messenger delivered the tidings just as the facts rose up in his own mind.

How vapid, diffused, and alliterated, is the report of the messenger in the Persae of AEschylus, who comes to the queen with the tremendous account of the destruction of the whole naval power of the Persians, at the battle of Salamis? I shall give his first speech, and leave the reader to compare the two accounts.

ω γης απασης ασιδος πολισματα,  
 ω περσις αια, και πολυς πλουτου λιμην,  
 ὡς εν μια πληγη κατεφθαρται πολυς  
 ολβος, το περσων δ' ανθος οιχται πεσον.  
 ωμοι, κακον μεν πρωτον αγγελλειν κακα·  
 περσαις, στρατος γαρ πας αλωλε βαρβαρων.

Of which I subjoin the following translation by Mr. Potter:—

*Wo to the towns through Asia's peopled realms!  
Wo to the land of Persia, once the port  
Of boundless wealth! how is thy glorious state  
Vanish'd at once, and all thy spreading honors  
Fallen, lost! Ah me! unhappy is his task  
That bears unhappy tidings; but constraint  
Compels me to relate this tale of wo:  
Persians! the whole barbaric host is fallen.*

This is the sum of his account, which he afterwards details in about a dozen of speeches.

Heroes and conquerors, ancient and modern, have been celebrated for comprising a vast deal of information in a few words. I will give three examples, and have no doubt that the Benjamite in the text will be found to have greatly the advantage.

1. Julius Caesar having totally defeated Pharnaces, king of Pontus, wrote a letter to the Roman senate, which contained only these three words:—

*VENI, VIDI, VICI;*  
*I came, I saw, I conquered.*

This war was begun and ended in one day.

2. Admiral HAWKE having totally defeated the French fleet, in 1759, off the coast of Brittany, wrote as follows to King George II.:—

“SIRE, I have taken, burnt, and destroyed all the French fleet, as per margin. — HAWKE.”

3. NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, then general-in-chief of the French armies in Italy, wrote to Josephine, his wife, the evening before he attacked Field Marshal Alvinzi, the imperial general:—

“Demain j’attaquerai l’ennemie; je le battrai; et j’en finirai.” “To-morrow I shall attack the enemy; I shall defeat them, and terminate the business.” He did so: the imperialists were totally defeated, Mantua surrendered, and the campaign for that year (1796) was concluded.



In the above examples, excellent as they are in their kind, we find little more than one idea, whereas the report of the Benjamite includes several; for, in the most forcible manner, he points out the general and particular disasters of the day, the rout of the army, the great slaughter, the death of the priests, who were in effect the whole generals of the army, and the capture of the ark; all that, on such an occasion, could affect and distress the heart of an Israelite. And all this he does in four simple assertions.

**Verse 18. *When he made mention of the ark of God*** Eli bore all the relation till the messenger came to this solemn word; he had trembled before for the ark, and now, hearing that it was captured, he was transfixed with grief, fell down from his seat, and dislocated his neck! Behold the judgments of God! But shall we say that this man, however remiss in the education of his children, and criminal in his indulgence towards his profligate sons, which arose more from the easiness of his disposition than from a desire to encourage vice, is gone to perdition? God forbid! No man ever died with such benevolent and religious feelings, and yet perished.

***He had judged Israel forty years*** Instead of forty years, the Septuagint has here **εἰκοσι ἔτη**, twenty years. All the other versions, as well as the Hebrew text, have forty years.

**Verse 19. *And his daughter-in-law*** This is another very affecting story; the defeat of Israel, the capture of the ark, the death of her father-in-law, and the slaughter of her husband, were more than a woman in her circumstances, near the time of her delivery could bear. She bowed, travailed, was delivered of a son, gave the child a name indicative of the ruined state of Israel, and expired!

**Verse 20. *But she answered not*** She paid no attention to what the women had said concerning her having borne a son; that information she regarded not.

**Verse 21. *She named the child I-chabod*** The versions are various on the original words **כְּבוֹד** I-chabod; the Septuagint, **ουαιβραχαβωθ** ouaibrachaboth; the Syriac, (Syriac) yochobor; the Arabic, (Arabic) yochabad. But none of these give us much light on the subject. It is pretty evident they did not know well what signification to give the name; and we are left to collect its meaning from what she says afterwards, The glory is

departed from Israel; the words literally mean, Where is the glory? And indeed where was it, when the armies of Israel were defeated by the Philistines, the priests slain, the supreme magistrate dead, and the ark of the Lord taken?

THIS is a very eventful, interesting, and affecting chapter, and prepares the reader for those signal manifestations of God's power and providence by which the ark was restored, the priesthood re-established, an immaculate judge given to Israel, the Philistine yoke broken, and the people of the Most High caused once more to triumph. God humbled them that he might exalt them; he suffered his glory for a time to become eclipsed, that he might afterwards cause it to break out with the greater effulgence.

## CHAPTER 5

*The Philistines set up the ark in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod; whose image is found next morning prostrate before it, broken in pieces, 1-5. The Philistines are also smitten with a sore disease, 6. The people of Ashdod refuse to let the ark stay with them; and the lords of the Philistines, with whom they consulted, order it to be carried to Gath, 7, 8. They do so; and God smites the inhabitants of that city, young and old, with the same disease, 9. They send the ark to Ekron, and a heavy destruction fags upon that city, and they resolve to send it back to Shiloh, 10-12.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *Brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod.*** Ashdod or Azotus was one of the five satrapies or lordships of the Philistines.

**Verse 2. *The house of Dagon*** On this idol, which was supposed to be partly in a human form, and partly in that of a fish, see the note on Judges 16:23. Some think that this idol was the same with Dirceto, Attergatis, the Venus of Askelon, and the Moon. — See Calmet's Dissertation on the gods of the Philistines.

The motive which induced the Philistines to set up the ark in the temple of Dagon, may be easily ascertained. It was customary, in all nations, to dedicate the spoils taken from an enemy to their gods: 1. As a gratitude-offering for the help which they supposed them to have furnished; and, 2. As a proof that their gods, i.e., the gods of the conquerors, were more powerful than those of the conquered. It was, no doubt, to insult the God of Israel, and to insult and terrify his people, that they placed his ark in the temple of Dagon. When the Philistines had conquered Saul, they hung up his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth, 1 Samuel 31:10. And when David slew Goliath, he laid up his sword in the tabernacle of the Lord, 1 Samuel 21:8, 9. We have the remains of this custom in the depositing of colors, standards, etc., taken from an enemy, in our churches; but whether this may be called superstition or a religious act,

is hard to say. If the battle were the Lord's, which few battles are, the dedication might be right.

**Verse 3. *They of Ashdod arose early on the morrow*** Probably to perform some act of their superstition in the temple of their idol.

***Dagon was fallen upon his face*** This was one proof, which they little expected, of the superiority of the God of Israel.

***Set him in his place again.*** Supposing his fall might have been merely accidental.

**Verse 4. *Only the stump of Dagon was left*** Literally, Only דגון (i.e., the little fish) was left. It has already been remarked that Dagon had the head, arms and hands of a man or woman, and that the rest of the idol was in the form of a fish, to which Horace is supposed to make allusion in the following words:—

*Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne*

*“The upper part resembling a beautiful woman; the lower, a fish.”*

All that was human in his form was broken off from what resembled a fish. Here was a proof that the affair was not accidental; and these proofs of God's power and authority prepared the way for his judgments.

**Verse 5. *Tread on the threshold*** Because the arms, etc., of Dagon were broken off by his fall on the threshold, the threshold became sacred, and neither his priests nor worshippers ever tread on the threshold. Thus it was ordered, in the Divine providence, that, by a religious custom of their own, they should perpetuate their disgrace, the insufficiency of their worship, and the superiority of the God of Israel.

It is supposed that the idolatrous Israelites, in the time of Zephaniah, had adopted the worship of Dagon: and that in this sense 1 Samuel 1:9 is to be understood: In the same day will I punish all those who leap upon the threshold. In order to go into such temples, and not tread on the threshold, the people must step or leap over them; and in this way the above passage may be understood. Indeed, the thresholds of the temples in various places were deemed so sacred that the people were accustomed to fall down and

kiss them. When Christianity became corrupted, this adoration of the thresholds of the churches took place.

**Verse 6. *Smote them with emerods*** The word **עפלים** apholim, from **עפל** aphal, to be elevated, probably means the disease called the bleeding piles, which appears to have been accompanied with dysentery, bloody flux, and ulcerated anus.

The Vulgate says, Et percussit in secretiori parte natium; “And he smote them in the more secret parts of their posteriors.” To this the psalmist is supposed to refer, Psalm 78:66, He smote all his enemies in the HINDER PARTS; he put them to a perpetual reproach. Some copies of the Septuagint have **εξεξεσεν αυτοις εις τας ναυς**, “he inflamed them in their ships:” other copies have **εις τας εδρας**, “in their posteriors.” The Syriac is the same. The Arabic enlarges: “He smote them in their posteriors, so that they were affected with a dysentery.” I suppose them to have been affected with enlargements of the haemorrhoidal veins, from which there came frequent discharges of blood.

The Septuagint and Vulgate make a very material addition to this verse: **και μεσον της χωρας αυτης ανεφουεσιν μυες· και εγενετο συγχυσις θανατου μεγαλη εν τη πολει**; Et ebullierunt villae et agri in medio regionis illius; et nati sunt mures, et facta est confusio mortis magna in civitate: “And the cities and fields of all that region burst up, and mice were produced, and there was the confusion of a great death in the city.” This addition Houbigant contends was originally in the Hebrew text; and this gives us the reason why golden mice were sent, as well as the images of the emerods, (1 Samuel 6:4,) when the ark was restored.

**Verse 7. *His hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.*** Here the end was completely answered: they now saw that they had not prevailed against Israel, on account of their god being more powerful than Jehovah; and they now feel how easily this God can confound and destroy their whole nation.

**Verse 8. *The lords of the Philistines*** The word **סרני** sarney, which we translate lords, is rendered by the Chaldee **טורני** turenay, tyrants. The Syriac is the same. By the Vulgate and Septuagint, satrapae, satraps. Palestine was divided into five satrapies: Ashdod, Ekron, Askelon, Gath,

and Gaza. See Joshua 13:8. But these were all federates and acted under one general government, for which they assembled in council.

***Let the ark-be carried about*** They probably thought that their affliction rose from some natural cause; and therefore they wished the ark to be carried about from place to place, to see what the effects might be. If they found the same evil produced wherever it came, then they must conclude that it was a judgment from the God of Israel.

**Verse 9. *The hand of the Lord was against the city*** As it was at Ashdod, so it was at Gath. The Vulgate says, Et computrescebant prominenter extales eorum; which conveys the idea of a bloody flux, dysentery, and ulcerated anus; and it adds, what is not to be found in the Hebrew text, nor many of the versions, except some traces in the Septuagint, Et fecerunt sibi sedes pelliceas, “And they made unto themselves seats of skins;” for the purpose of sitting more easy, on account of the malady already mentioned.

**Verse 11. *Send away the ark*** It appears that it had been received at Ekron, for there was a deadly destruction through the whole city. They therefore concluded that the ark should be sent back to Shiloh.

**Verse 12. *The men that died not*** Some it seems were smitten with instant death; others with the haemorrhoids, and there was a universal consternation; and the cry of the city went up to heaven-it was an exceeding great cry.

It does not appear that the Philistines had any correct knowledge of the nature of Jehovah, though they seemed to acknowledge his supremacy. They imagined that every country, district, mountain, and valley, had its peculiar deity; who, in its place, was supreme over all others. They thought therefore to appease Jehovah by sending him back his ark or shrine: and, in order to be redeemed from their plagues, they send golden mice and emerods as telesms, probably made under some particular configurations of the planets. See at the end of 1 Samuel 6:21.

## CHAPTER 6

*After the ark had been seven months in the land of the Philistines, they consult their priests and diviners about sending it to Shiloh, 1, 2. They advise that it be sent back with a trespass-offering of five golden emerods, and five golden mice, 3-6. They advise also that it be sent back on a new cart, drawn by two milch kine from whom their calves shall be tied up; and then conclude that if these cows shalt take the way of Beth-hemesh, as going to the Israelitish border, then the LORD had afflicted them, if not, then their evils were accidental, 7-9. They do as directed; and the kine take the way of Beth-shemesh, 10-13. They stop in the field of Joshua; and the men of Beth-shemesh take them, and offer them to the Lord for a burnt-offering, and cleave the wood of the cart to burn them, and make sundry other offerings, 14, 15. The offerings of the five lords of the Philistines, 16-18. For too curiously looking into the ark, the men of Beth-shemesh are smitten of the Lord, 19, 20. They send to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, that they may take away the ark, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 2. *The diviners*** כֹּסֵמִים *kosemim*, from קָסַם *kasam*, to presage or prognosticate. See Deuteronomy 18:10. In what their pretended art consisted, we know not.

**Verse 3. *Send it not empty*** As it appears ye have trespassed against him, send him an offering for this trespass.

***Why his hand is not removed*** The sense is, If you send him a trespass-offering, and ye be cured, then ye shall know why his judgments have not been taken away from you previously to this offering.

It is a common opinion, says Calmet, among all people, that although the Supreme Being needs nothing of his creatures, yet he requires that they should consecrate to him all that they have; for the same argument that proves his independence, infinitude, and self-sufficiency, proves our dependence, and the obligation we are under to acknowledge him by

offering him due marks of our gratitude and submission. Such sentiments were common among all people; and God himself commands his people not to appear before him without an offering, Exodus 23:15: None shall appear before me empty.

**Verse 4. *Five golden emerods, and five golden mice*** One for each satrapy. The emerods had afflicted their bodies; the mice had marred their land. Both, they considered, as sent by God; and, making an image of each, and sending them as a trespass-offering, they acknowledged this. See at the end.

**Verse 5. *He will lighten his hand from off you*** The whole land was afflicted; the ground was marred by the mice; the common people and the lords afflicted by the haemorrhoids, and their gods broken in pieces.

**Verse 6. *Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts*** They had heard how God punished the Egyptians, and they are afraid of similar plagues. It appears that they had kept the ark long enough.

***Did they not let the people go*** And has he not wrought wonderfully among us? And should we not send back his ark?

**Verse 7. *Make a new cart*** It was indecent and improper to employ in any part of the worship of God any thing that had before served for a common purpose. Every thing in the worship of God is said to be sanctified: now the general meaning of that word is, to separate a thing from all earthly and common uses, and devote it solely to the service of God.

When David removed the ark from the house of Abinadab, he put it on a new cart, 2 Samuel 6:3.

***Bring their calves home from them*** So it appears that their calves had been with them in the fields. This was a complete trial: unless they were supernaturally influenced, they would not leave their calves; unless supernaturally directed, they would not leave their home, and take a way unguided, which they had never gone before.

**Verse 8. *The jewels of gold*** The word קלי' keley, which our translators so often render jewels, signifies vessels, implements, ornaments, etc. A



jewel of gold has an odd sound to those who always attach the idea of a precious stone to the term.

**Verse 9. A chance that happened to us** The word **מִקְרָה** mikreh, from **קָרָה** karah, to meet or coalesce, signifies an event that naturally arises from such concurring causes as, in the order and nature of things, must produce it.

Thus a bad state of the atmosphere, putrid exhalations, bad diet, occasioned by any general scarcity, might have produced the disease in question; and to something of this kind they would attribute it, if the other evidences did not concur. This gives us the proper notion of chance; and shows us that it is a matter as dependent upon the Divine providence, as any thing can be: in short, that these occurrences are parts of the Divine government.

The word chance, though often improperly used to signify such an occurrence as is not under the Divine government, is of itself, not only simple, but expressive; and has nearly the meaning of the Hebrew word: it comes from the French *cheoir*, or *escheoir*, to fall out, to occur, to fall to. Hence our law-term *escheat*, any lands that fall to the lord of the manor by forfeiture, or for want of heirs: i.e., these are the occurrences which naturally throw the lands into the hands of the lord.

**Verse 12. Lowing as they went** Calling for their calves.

**To the right hand or to the left** Some think they were placed where two roads met; one going to Ekron, the other to Beth-shemesh. It is possible that they were put in such circumstances as these for the greater certainty of the affair: to have turned from their own homes, from their calves and known pasture, and to have taken the road to a strange country, must argue supernatural influence.

**The lords of the Philistines went after** They were so jealous in this business that they would trust no eyes but their own. All this was wisely ordered, that there might be the fullest conviction of the being and interposition of God.

**Verse 14. They clave the wood of the cart** Both the cart and the cattle having been thus employed, could no longer be devoted to any secular

services; therefore the cattle were sacrificed, and the cart was broken up for fuel to consume the sacrifice.

**Verse 15. *The Levites took down*** It appears there were some of the tribe of Levi among the people of Beth-shemesh: to them appertained the service of the tabernacle.

**Verse 17. *These are the golden emerods*** Each of these cities, in what may be called its corporate capacity, sent a golden emerod.

**Verse 18. *And the golden mice*** The desolation that had been made through the land by these animals had excited a general concern; and it appears from the text, that all the cities of the Philistines, as well fenced as without walls, sent a golden mouse as a trespass-offering.

***Remaineth unto this day*** Some think the ark is intended, which continued on the stone of Abel for some considerable time after it was placed there; and that the memoranda from which this book was afterwards compiled, were made before it was removed: but it is not likely that it remained any time exposed in the open field. Therefore it is most natural to suppose that it is the stone of Abel which is here intended; and so our translators have understood the place, and have used supplementary words to express this sentiment: “Which stone remaineth unto this day.”

**Verse 19. *He smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men*** The present Hebrew text of this most extraordinary reading stands thus: וַיַּיַח בְּאִנְשֵׁי בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ וַיַּיַח בְּעַם שִׁבִּימִם אֶלֶף אִישׁ vaiyach beanshey Beith-shemesh-vaiyach baam shibim ish, chamishshim eleph ish; “And he smote among the men of Beth-shemesh, (because they looked into the ark of Jehovah,) and he smote among the people SEVENTY men, FIFTY THOUSAND men.”

From the manner in which the text stands, and from the great improbability of the thing, it is most likely that there is a corruption in this text, or that some explanatory word is lost, or that the number fifty thousand has been added by ignorance or design; it being very improbable that such a small village as Beth-shemesh should contain or be capable of employing fifty thousand and seventy men in the fields at wheat harvest, much less that they could all peep into the ark on the stone of Abel, in the corn-field of Joshua.

That the words are not naturally connected in the Hebrew text, is evident; and they do not stand better in the versions.

1. The VULGATE renders it thus:-Et percussit de populo SEPTUAGINTA viros; et QUINQUAGINTA MILLA plebis; “And he smote of the (chief) people SEVENTY men, and FIFTY THOUSAND of the (common) people.” This distinction, I suppose, St. Jerome intended between plebis and populus; which he might think was warranted by the אנשים anashim, and וְאִישׁ ish, of the Hebrew text.

2. The TARGUM of Jonathan is something similar to the Vulgate:-“And he smote בסבי עמא besabey amma, of the elders of the people SEVENTY men; ובקהל ubekahala, and of the congregation FIFTY THOUSAND men.”

3. The SEPTUAGINT follow the Hebrew text: και επαταξεν εν αυτοις εβδομηκοντα ανδρας, και πεντηκοντα χιλιαδας ανδρων; “And he smote of them SEVENTY men; and FIFTY THOUSAND men.” εκ του λαου, of the people, is added by some copies.

4. The SYRIAC has forty-five thousand less! It is as follows: (Syriac) wamacho Morio beamo chamesho alapin weshabein gabrin; “And the Lord smote among the people FIVE thousand and SEVENTY men.”

5. The ARABIC is nearly similar: “And the LORD smote among the people; and there died of them [A] Five thousand and Seventy men.”

We have no other versions from which we can receive any farther light.

6. JOSEPHUS is different from all the rest, and has fifty thousand less, for he renders the place thus, Antiq. Jud. libe. vi., cap. i., sect. 4: θρηγη δε και χολος του θεου μετεισιν, ωστε εβδομηκοντα των εκ της βηθσαμης κωμης-βαλων απεκτεινεν “But the displeasure and wrath of God pursued them so, that SEVENTY men of the village of Beth-shemesh, approaching the ark, which they were not worthy to touch, (not being priests,) were struck with lightning.” Here we find the whole fifty thousand is omitted.

7. Rabbi Solomon Jarchi, giving the opinion of other rabbins as well as his own, says, “Our rabbins say SEVENTY men, and each of them was worth fifty thousand men; or fifty thousand, every one of whom was worth the

seventy of the Sanhedrin.” This only shows embarrassment, but gives very little light.

All these discordances, together with the utter improbability of the thing, lead us to suppose there must be a corruption in this place, either by adding or omitting.

Dr. Kennicott has found three very reputable MSS. in which the words **חמשים אלף איש** chamishshim eleph ish, fifty thousand men, are wanting. The 1st, No. 84, a MS. from Holland; the 2d, No. 210, one of the Parisian MSS.; the 3d, No. 418, a MS. belonging to Milan; all three written about the beginning of the twelfth century, and numbered as above in Dr. K’s Bible.

Perhaps the omission in these MSS. was occasioned by a mistake of the transcriber, which might have easily happened, because of the word **איש** ish, which occurs both after **שבעים** shibim and after **אלף** eleph; for, having written the first, and taking his eye off, when he recommenced he might have supposed he had written the latter, and so proceed, leaving the words in question out of his copy. Two, three, or more persons might have been thus deceived, and so produce the above MSS.; or the mistake once made, all the MSS. copied from that would show the same omission. The common reading may be defended, if we only suppose the omission of a single letter, the particle of comparison **כ** ke, like, as, or equal to, before the word **חמשים** chamishshim: thus **כחמשים** kechamishshim; the passage would then read: “And he smote of the people SEVENTY men, equal to FIFTY THOUSAND men;” that is, they were the elders or governors of the people.

Some solve the difficulty by translating, “He slew SEVENTY men OUT OF fifty thousand men.” There are various other methods invented by learned men to remove this difficulty, which I shall not stop to examine; all, however, issue in this point, that only SEVENTY MEN were slain; and this is, without doubt the most probable. The FIFTY THOUSAND, therefore, must be an interpolation, or be understood in some such way as that mentioned above. But the omission of the particle of similitude solves every difficulty; and this would account for the reading in Josephus, who in his recital would naturally leave out such an explanation of the worth of

the seventy men, as his Roman readers could not easily comprehend such comparisons.

***With a great slaughter.*** Seventy men slain, out of an inconsiderable village in a harvest day, was certainly a great slaughter.

**Verse 20. *Who is able to stand*** Why this exclamation? They knew that

Antioch, and storks from appearing in Byzantium, by figures of those animals formed under certain constellations. A brazen scorpion, placed on a pillar in the city of Antioch, is said to have expelled all such animals from that country. And a crocodile of lead is also said to have preserved Cairo from the depredations of those monsters. See Calmet.

Virgil refers to this custom, Eclogue viii., ver. 80, where he represents a person making two images or telesms, one of wax, another of clay, which were to represent an absent person, who was to be alternately softened or hardened, as the wax or clay image was exposed to the fire:—

*Limus ut hic durescit, et haec ut cera liquescit  
Uno et eodem igni: sic nostro Daphnis amore.*

*“As this clay hardens, and this wax softens,  
by one and the same fire, so may Daphnis by my love.”*

This thought is borrowed from Theocritus, Idyl. ii., ver. 28.

A beautiful marble figure of Osiris, about four inches and a quarter high, now stands before me, entirely covered with hieroglyphics; he is standing, and holds in each hand a scorpion and a snake by the tails, and with each foot he stands on the neck of a crocodile. This I have no doubt was a telesm, formed under some peculiar configuration of the heavens, intended to drive away both scorpions and crocodiles. This image is of the highest antiquity, and was formed probably long before the Christian era.

Tavernier observes that something like what is mentioned in the text is practiced among the Indians; for when a pilgrim goes to one of the idol temples for a cure, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his circumstances, which he offers to his god. This custom was common among the heathens, and they consecrated to their gods the monuments of their deliverance. From heathenism it was adopted by corrupt Christianity; and Theodoret informs us that in his time there might be seen about the tombs of the martyrs figures of eyes, hands, feet, and other parts of the body, which represented those of the offerers which they supposed had been healed by the

handbarrows, hung up in different places, which were reported to be the votive offerings of the maimed, the halt, the withered, etc., who had received their cure by the virtue of the saint! It is true the crutches are such as no man or woman could ever walk with; and the barrows are such as most evidently never carried any human being. But they serve the purpose of superstition, and keep up an idolatrous reverence for the well and the legendary virgin.

After all, I need not say that the system of judicial astrology is vain, unfounded, absurd, and wicked. It in effect presumes to take the government of the world out of the hand of an all-wise God, and to abandon it to the most fortuitous and unconnected occurrences of life; for the stars have their influences according to this pretended science, conformably to the occurrences here below: e.g., if a child be born but one hour sooner or later than a particular configuration of the heavens, his destiny will be widely different from what it otherwise would have been; and as an almost infinite number of casualties may accelerate or retard a birth, consequently the whole destiny of man is influenced and ruled by these casualties: to say nothing of the absurdity, that those omnipotent stars ever can affect the infant while invested with a thin covering of flesh in the womb of its parent. But the whole science is a tissue of absurdities.

## CHAPTER 7

*The men of Kirjah-jearim bring the ark from Beth-shemesh, and consecrate Eleazar, the son of Abinadab, to keep it; and there it continued twenty years, 1, 2. Samuel reproves and exhorts the people, and gathers them together at Mizpeh, where they fast and pray, and confess their sins, 3-6. The Philistines go up against them; the Israelites cry unto the Lord for help; Samuel offers sacrifices; and the Lord confounds the Philistines with thunder; Israel discomfits and pursues them to Beth-car, 7-11. Samuel erects a stone for a memorial, and calls it Eben-ezer, 12. The Philistines are totally subdued, and Israel recovers all its lost cities, 13, 14. Samuel acts as an itinerant judge in Israel, 15-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1. *Fetches up the ark*** When these people received the message of the Beth-shemites, they probably consulted Samuel, with whom was the counsel of the Lord, and he had encouraged them to go and bring it up, else they might have expected such destruction as happened to the Beth-shemites.

***Sanctified Eleazar*** Perhaps this sanctifying signifies no more than setting this man apart, simply to take care of the ark.

**Verse 2. *It was twenty years*** This chapter contains the transactions of at least twenty years, but we know not the date of each event.

**Verse 3. *And Samuel spake*** We have heard nothing of this judge since he served in the tabernacle. He was now grown up, and established for a prophet in the land of Israel.

***If ye do return*** From your backsliding and idolatry.

***With all your hearts*** For outward services and professions will avail nothing.



**Put away the strange gods** Destroy their images, altars, and groves: they are strange; you do not know them as helpers, saviours, or defenders.

**Prepare your hearts** Let your hearts be straight and steady.

**And serve him only** Have no other religious service but his, and obey his laws.

**He will deliver you** Vain are your own exertions; he will deliver you in such a way as to show that the excellence of the power is of himself alone.

**Verse 4. Put away Baalim and Ashtaroth** These were not two particular deities, but two genera of idols; the one masculine, BAALIM; the other feminine, ASHTAROTH; both the words are in the plural number, and signify all their gods and goddesses.

**Verse 5. Gather all Israel to Mizpeh** This appears to have been an armed assembly, though probably collected principally for religious and political purposes; but Samuel knew that an unarmed multitude could not safely be convened in the vicinity of the Philistines.

**Verse 6. Drew water, and poured it out** It is not easy to know what is meant by this; it is true that pouring out water, in the way of libation, was a religious ordinance among the Hebrews, (Isaiah 12:3,) and among most other nations, particularly the Greeks and Romans, who used, not only water, but wine, milk, honey, and blood, as we find by Homer, Virgil, Euripides, Sophocles, Porphyry, and Lucian. Our Lord seems to allude to this ceremony, John 7:37, 38, where see the note.

The Chaldee Paraphrast understands the place differently, for he translates: "And they poured out their hearts in penitence, as WATERS, before the Lord." That deep penitential sorrow was represented under the notion of pouring out water, we have a direct proof in the case of David, who says, Psalm 22:14, I am Poured out like water, my heart is like wax; it is MELTED in the midst of my bowels. And to repentance, under this very similitude, the prophet exhorts fallen Jerusalem: Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches POUR OUT thine HEART LIKE WATER before the face of the Lord; Lamentations 2:19. David uses the same image, Psalm 62:8: Trust in him at all times, ye people; POUR OUT your hearts before him. The same figure is used by Hannah in 1 Samuel

1:15 of this book; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have **POURED OUT** my soul before the Lord. Perhaps the drawing and pouring out of water mentioned in the text was done emblematically, to represent the contrition of their hearts.

**And Samuel judged** He gave them ordinances, heard and redressed grievances, and taught them how to get reconciled to God. The assembly, therefore, was held for religio-politico-military purposes.

**Verse 7. The Philistines went up against Israel** They went to give them battle before that, by continual accessions of numbers, they should become too powerful.

**Verse 8. Cease not to cry unto the Lord** They had strong confidence in the intercession of Samuel, because they knew he was a holy man of God.

**Verse 9. Samuel took a sucking lamb** This sucking lamb must have been eight days under its mother before it could be offered, as the law says, Leviticus 22:27.

Though Samuel was not a priest, yet he offered this sacrifice; or he might have ordered Eleazar to offer it, and still be said to have done it himself: Qui facit per alterum, facit per se; “He who procures a thing to be done, may be said to do it himself.”

His not sacrificing at the tabernacle was justified by the necessity of the case; neither tabernacle nor ark was at hand.

**Verse 10. The Lord thundered with a great thunder** Literally, The Lord thundered with a great voice—he confounded them with a mighty tempest of thunder and lightning, and no doubt slew many by the lightning.

**Verse 11. Under Beth-car.** We know not where this place was; the Septuagint have Beth-chor; the Targum, Beth-saron; and the Syriac and Arabic, Beth-jasan.

**Verse 12. Called the name of it Eben-ezer** אב העזר Eben haezer, “The Stone of Help; “ perhaps a pillar is meant by the word stone.

**Verse 13. They came no more into the coast of Israel** Perhaps a more signal victory was never gained by Israel; the Lord had brought them low,

almost to extermination; and now, by his miraculous interference, he lifts them completely up, and humbles to the dust their proud oppressors. God often suffers nations and individuals to be brought to the lowest extremity, that he may show his mercy and goodness by suddenly rescuing them from destruction, when all human help has most evidently failed.

**Verse 14. *The cities which the Philistines had taken*** We are not informed of the particulars of these reprisals, but we may rest assured all this was not done in one day: perhaps the retaking of the cities was by slow degrees, through the space of several years.

***There was peace between Israel and the Amorites.*** That is, all the remaining Canaanites kept quiet, and did not attempt to molest the Israelites, when they found the Philistines, the most powerful of the ancient inhabitants of the land, broken and subdued before them.

**Verse 15. *Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.*** Samuel is supposed to have lived one hundred years; he did not begin to judge Israel till he was about forty years of age; and if he was one hundred years of age when he died, he must have been a judge sixty years, and consequently filled that office during the whole of Saul's reign. But that he had been dead before Saul's last battle, is evident from the transactions of that king with the witch of En-dor, and probably not long before. Samuel was the prophet of that time; declared the will of the Lord, and frequently directed both the civil and military transactions of the kingdom. Samuel seems, in many respects, to have been considered the governor of the people, while Saul was only looked on as the general of the armies.

**Verse 16. *He went from year to year in circuit*** When he was at BETH-EL, the tribe of Ephraim, and all the northern parts of the country, could attend him; when at GILGAL, the tribe of Benjamin, and those beyond Jordan, might have easy access to him; and when at MIZPEH, he was within reach of Judah, Simeon, and Gad; but Ramah was the place of his ordinary abode; and there he held his court, for there he judged Israel; and, as it is probable that Shiloh was destroyed, it is said, 1 Samuel 7:17, that there (*viz.*, at Ramah) he built an altar unto the Lord. This altar, being duly consecrated, the worship performed at it was strictly legal.

Ramah, which is said to be about six miles from Jerusalem, was the seat of prophecy during the life of Samuel; and there it is probable all Israel came to consult him on matters of a spiritual nature, as there was the only altar of God in the land of Israel.

## CHAPTER 8

*Samuel, grown old, makes his sons judges in Beer-sheba, 1, 2. They pervert judgment; and the people complain, and desire a king, 3-5. Samuel is displeased, and inquires of the Lord, 6. The Lord is also displeased; but directs Samuel to appoint them a king, and to show them solemnly the consequences of their choice, 7-9. Samuel does so; and shows them what they may expect from an absolute monarch, and how afflicted they should be under his administration, 10-18. The people refuse to recede from their demand; and Samuel lays the matter before the Lord, and dismisses them, 19-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1.** *When Samuel was old* Supposed to be about sixty.

*He made his sons judges* He appointed them as his lieutenants to superintend certain affairs in Beer-sheba, which he could not conveniently attend to himself. But they were never judges in the proper sense of the word; Samuel was the last judge in Israel, and he judged it to the day of his death. See 1 Samuel 7:16.

**Verse 3.** *His sons walked not in his ways* Their iniquity is pointed out in three words: 1. They turned aside after lucre; the original (בצַ batsa) signifies to cut, clip, break off; and therefore Mr. Parkhurst thinks that it means nearly the same with our clipping of coin. It however expresses here the idea of avarice, of getting money by hook or by crook. The Targum says, “They looked after ממוֹ דִשְׁקָר mamon dishkar, the mammon of unrighteousness;” of which they did not make unto themselves friends but enemies; see the note on Matthew 6:24. 2. They took bribes; שְׂחָדִי shochad, gifts or presents, to blind their eyes. 3. They perverted judgment—they turned judgment aside; they put it out of its regular path; they sold it to the highest bidder: thus the wicked rich man had his cause, and the poor man was oppressed and deprived of his right. This was the custom in our own country before MAGNA CHARTA was obtained; he that

would speed in the king's court must bribe all the officers, and fee both the king and queen! I have found in our ancient records the most barefaced and shameful examples of this kind; but it was totally abolished, invito rege, by that provision in the above charter which states, Nulli vendemus, nulli negabimus ant differemus rectum aut iudicium; "To no man will we sell, to no man will we deny or defer, justice and right." It was customary in those inauspicious times, for judgment to be delayed in banco regis, in the king's court, as long as there was any hope that more money would be paid in order to bring it to issue. And there were cases, where the king did not like the party, in which he denied justice and judgment entirely! Magna Charta brought them to book, and brought the subject to his right.

Of those times it might well be said, as Homer did, Iliad xvi., ver. 387.

οι βιη αγορη σκολιας κρινωσι θεμιστας,  
εκ δε δικην ελασωσι, θεων οπιν ουκ αλεγοντες.

*"When guilty mortals break the eternal laws,  
Or judges, bribed, betray the righteous cause."*

"When the laws are perverted by force; when justice is expelled from her seat; when judges are swayed from the right, regardless of the vengeance of Heaven." Or, in other words, these were times in which the streams of justice were poisoned in their source, and judges neither feared God nor regarded man.

**Verse 5. *Make us a king*** Hitherto, from the time in which they were a people, the Israelites were under a theocracy, they had no other king but GOD. Now they desire to have a king like the other nations around them, who may be their general in battle; for this is the point at which they principally aim.

**Verse 6. *The thing displeased Samuel*** Because he saw that this amounted to a formal renunciation of the Divine government.

***Samuel prayed unto the Lord*** He begged to know his mind in this important business.

**Verse 7. *They have rejected me*** They wish to put that government in the hands of a mortal, which was always in the hands of their GOD. But

hearken unto their voice—grant them what they request. So we find God grants that in his displeasure which he withholds in his mercy.

**Verse 9. *Show them the manner of the king*** The word מִשְׁפָּט mishpat, which we here render manner, signifies simply what the king would and might require, according to the manner in which kings in general ruled; all of whom, in those times, were absolute and despotic.

The whole of this manner of the king is well illustrated by Puffendorf. “Hitherto,” says he, “the people of Israel had lived under governors raised up of God, who had exacted no tribute of them, nor put them to any charge; but, little content with this form of government. they desire to have a king like other nations, who should live in magnificence and pomp, keep armies, and be able to resist any invasion. Samuel informs them what it was they desired; that when they understood it, they might consider whether they would persist in their choice. If they would have a king splendidly attended, he tells them that he would take their sons for his chariots, etc.; if they would have him keep up constant forces, then he would appoint them for colonels and captains, and employ those in his wars who were accustomed to follow their family business; and since, after the manner of other kings, he must keep a stately court, they must be content that their daughters should serve in several offices, which the king would think below the dignity of his wives and daughters, 1 Samuel 8:13. Many ministers also, in several departments, both of war and peace, must have salaries to support them, which must be paid out of their fields and vineyards, 1 Samuel 8:14. In one word, that to sustain his dignity their king would exact the tenth of all they possessed, and be maintained in a royal manner out of their estates,”

It is perfectly vain in Grotius, or any one else, to state that this shows what a king, as king, may any where in virtue of his office, claim and exact; and that he can take the property and persons of his subjects, and dispose of them as he may judge necessary for the exigence of the state. This was the manner of Saul, but Saul was not a king of God’s choosing: “He gave him in his wrath, and took him away in his displeasure;” and the manner of such a king should not be arrogated by any potentate who affects to rule *jure divino*, by Divine right. The manner of the king of God’s choice is

distinctly detailed, Deuteronomy 17:15-20, to which the reader will do well to refer, that he may have an impartial statement of the subject.

**Verse 19. *The people refused to obey*** They would have the king, his manner and all, notwithstanding the solemn warning which they here receive.

**Verse 20. *May judge us*** This appears to be a rejection of Samuel.

***Go out before us*** Be in every respect our head and governor.

***And fight our battles.*** Be the general of our armies.

**Verse 21. *Rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord.*** He went to the altar, and in his secret devotion laid the whole business before God.

**Verse 22. *Hearken unto their voice*** Let them have what they desire, and let them abide the consequences.

***Go ye every man unto his city.*** It seems the elders of the people had tarried all this time with Samuel, and when he had received his ultimate answer from God, he told them of it and dismissed them.

ON this account we may observe: 1. That GOD did not change the government of Israel; it was the people themselves who changed it. 2. That though God permitted them to have a king, yet he did not approve of him. 3. That, notwithstanding he did not suffer them to choose the man, he ordered his servant Samuel to choose him by lot, he disposing of that lot. 4. That God never gave up the supreme government; he was still KING in Israel, and the king, so called, was only the vicegerent or deputy of the Lord. 6. That no king of Judah attempted to be supreme, therefore they never made new laws, nor altered the old; which was a positive confession that God was the supreme Legislator. 6. That an absolute monarchy is always an evil, and is contrary to all the rights, civil and religious, of mankind; a mode of government that all people should avoid, as pregnant with evils to mankind. 7. That although it was a sin in the Israelites to desire a king, that is, to change a constitution of which God was the author, yet kingly government, properly understood, is a good of the first magnitude to the civil happiness of mankind. 8. That by kingly government, properly understood, I mean such a monarchical government as that of Great Britain, where the king, the nobles, and the people, are



duly mixed, each having his proper part in the government, and each preventing the other from running to excess, and all limited by law. 9. That the three grand forms of government which have obtained among mankind, viz., monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, have each certain advantages without which no state can be well preserved; but they have evils by which any state may be injured. 10. That, from a proper mixture of these, the advantages of the whole may be reaped without any of their attendant evils, and that this is the British constitution; which, not merely the wisdom of our ancestors, but the providence of God has given unto us, and of which no other state has had common sense enough to avail themselves, though they see that because of this the British empire is the most powerful and the most happy in the universe, and likely at last to give laws to the whole world. The manner of our king is constitutional, widely different from that of Saul, and from that of any other potentate in the four quarters of the globe. He is the father of his people, and the people feel and love him as such. He has all the power necessary to do good; they have all the liberty necessary to their political happiness, had they only a diminution of taxes, which at present are too heavy for any nation to bear.

## CHAPTER 9

*Saul's lineage and description; he is sent by his father to seek some lost asses, 1-5. Not finding them, he purposes to go and consult Samuel concerning the proper method of proceeding, 6-14. The Lord informs Samuel that he should anoint Saul king, 15, 16. Samuel invites Saul to dine with him, and informs him that the asses are found; and gives him an intimation that he is to be king, 17-21. Saul dines with Samuel, and afterwards he is taken to the house-top, where both commune together, 22-27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. *A mighty man of power.*** Literally, a strong man; this appears to be the only power he possessed; and the physical strength of the father may account for the extraordinary size of the son. See 1 Samuel 9:2.

**Verse 2. *From his shoulders and upwards*** It was probably from this very circumstance that he was chosen for king; for, where kings were elective, in all ancient times great respect was paid to personal appearance.

**Verse 3. *The asses of Kish-were lost*** What a wonderful train of occurrences were connected in order to bring Saul to the throne of Israel! Every thing seems to go on according to the common course of events, and yet all conspired to favor the election of a man to the kingdom who certainly did not come there by the approbation of God.

Asses grow to great perfection in the East; and at this time, as there were no horses in Judea, they were very useful; and on them kings and princes rode.

**Verse 5. *Were come to the land of Zuph*** Calmet supposes that Saul and his servant went from Gibeah to Shalisha, in the tribe of Dan; from thence to Shalim, near to Jerusalem; and thence, traversing the tribe of Benjamin, they purposed to return to Gibeah; but passing through the land of Zuph, in which Ramatha, the country of Samuel, was situated, they determined

to call on this prophet to gain some directions from him; the whole of this circuit he supposes to have amounted to no more than about twenty-five leagues, or three days' journey. We do not know where the places were situated which are here mentioned: the Targum translates thus: "And he passed through the mount of the house of Ephraim, and went into the southern land, but did not meet with them. And he passed through the land of Mathbera, but they were not there; and he passed through the land of the tribe of Benjamin, but did not find them; then they came into the land where the prophet of the Lord dwelt. And Saul said to his servant," etc.

**Verse 7. *There is not a present to bring to the man of God*** We are not to suppose from this that the prophets took money to predict future events: Saul only refers to an invariable custom, that no man approached a superior without a present of some kind or other. We have often seen this before; even God, who needs nothing, would not that his people should approach him with empty hands. "It is very common in Bengal for a person, who is desirous of asking a favor from a superior, to take a present of fruits or sweetmeats in his hand. If not accepted, the feelings of the offerer are greatly wounded. The making of presents to appease a superior is also very common in Bengal." -WARD'S Customs.

**Verse 8. *The fourth part of a shekel of silver*** We find from the preceding verse, that the bread or provisions which they had brought with them for their journey was expended, else a part of that would have been thought a suitable present; and here the fourth part of a shekel of silver, about ninepence of our money, was deemed sufficient: therefore the present was intended more as a token of respect than as an emolument.

**Verse 9. *Beforetime in Israel*** This passage could not have been a part of this book originally: but we have already conjectured that Samuel, or some contemporary author, wrote the memoranda, out of which a later author compiled this book. This hypothesis, sufficiently reasonable in itself, solves all difficulties of this kind.

***Was beforetime called a seer.*** The word seer, רֹאֵי roeh, occurs for the first time in this place; it literally signifies a person who SEES; particularly preternatural sights. A seer and a prophet were the same in most cases; only with this difference, the seer was always a prophet, but the prophet was not always a seer. A seer seems to imply one who frequently met

with, and saw, some symbolical representation of God. The term prophet was used a long time before this; Abraham is called a prophet, Genesis 20:7, and the term frequently occurs in the law. Besides, the word seer does not occur before this time; but often occurs afterwards down through the prophets, for more than three hundred years. See Amos 7:12; Micah 3:7.

All prophets, false and true, profess to see God; see the case of Balaam, Numbers 24:4, 16, and Jeremiah 14:14. All diviners, in their enthusiastic flights, boasted that they had those things exhibited to their sight which should come to pass. There is a remarkable account in Virgil which may serve as a specimen of the whole; the Sibyl professes to be a seer:—

— *Bella, horrida bella,  
Et Tyberim molto spumantem sanguine*

*CERNO.AEN. lib. vi., ver. 86.*

*Wars, horrid wars, I VIEW; a field of blood;  
And Tyber rolling with a purple flood.*

I think the 9th verse comes more naturally in after the 11th. {1 Samuel 9:9, 11}

**Verse 11.** *Young maidens going out to draw water* So far is it from being true, that young women were always kept closely shut up at home, that we find them often in the field, drawing and carrying water, as here.

**Verse 12.** *He came to-day to the city* Though Samuel lived chiefly in Ramah, yet he had a dwelling in the country, at a place called Naioth, where it is probable there was a school of the prophets. See 1 Samuel 19:18-24.

*A sacrifice of the people* A great feast. The animals used were first sacrificed to the Lord; that is, their blood was poured out before him; and then all the people fed on the flesh. By high place probably Samuel's altar is alone meant; which no doubt was raised on an eminence.

**Verse 13.** *He doth bless the sacrifice* He alone can perform the religious rites which are used on this occasion.

**Afterwards they eat that be bidden.** Among the Arabs, often a large feast is made of sacrificed camels, etc., and then the people of the vicinity are invited to come and partake of the sacrifice. This is the custom to which allusion is made here.

**Verse 14. Come out against them** Met them.

**Verse 15. Now the Lord had told Samuel** How this communication was made, we cannot tell.

**Verse 16. Thou shalt anoint him to be captain** Not to be king, but to be נגיד nagid or captain of the Lord's host. But in ancient times no king was esteemed who was not an able warrior. Plutarch informs us that Alexander the Great esteemed the following verse the most correct, as to its sentiment, of any in the whole Iliad of Homer:—

ουτος γ' ατρειδης ευρυκρειων αγαμεμων,  
αμφοτερον βασιλευς τ' αγαθος, κρατερος τ' αιχητης.

*“The king of kings, Atrides, you survey;  
Great in the war, and great in acts of sway.”*  
POPE.

**Verse 17. Behold the man whom I spake to thee of** What an intimate communion must Samuel have held with his God! A constant familiarity seems to have existed between them.

**Verse 19. I am the seer** This declaration would prepare Saul for the communications afterwards made.

**Verse 20. As for thine asses** Thus he shows him that he knew what was in his heart, God having previously revealed these things to Samuel.

**And on whom is all the desire of Israel?** Saul understood this as implying that he was chosen to be king.

**Verse 21. Amos not I a Benjamite** This speech of Saul is exceedingly modest; he was now becomingly humble; but who can bear elevation and prosperity? The tribe of Benjamin had not yet recovered its strength, after the ruinous war it had with the other tribes, Judges 20:29-46.

**Verse 22. *Brought them into the parlour*** It might as well be called kitchen; it was the place where they sat down to feast.

**Verse 23. *Said unto the cook*** טבח tabbach, here rendered cook; the singular of טבחיות tabbachoth, female cooks, 1 Samuel 8:13, from the root tabach, to slay or butcher. Probably the butcher is here meant.

**Verse 24. *The shoulder, and that which was upon it*** Probably the shoulder was covered with a part of the caul, that it might be the better roasted. The Targum has it the shoulder and its thigh; not only the shoulder merely, but the fore-leg bone to the knee; perhaps the whole fore-quarter. Why was the shoulder set before Saul? Not because it was the best part, but because it was an emblem of the government to which he was now called. See Isaiah 9:6: And the government shall be upon his SHOULDER.

**Verse 25. *Upon the top of the house.*** All the houses in the East were flat-roofed; on these people walked, talked, and frequently slept, for the sake of fresh and cooling air.

**Verse 26. *Called Saul to the top of the house*** Saul had no doubt slept there all night; and now, it being the break of day, "Samuel called to Saul on the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away." There was no calling him to the house-top a second time he was sleeping there, and Samuel called him up.

**Verse 27. *As they were going down*** So it appears that Saul arose immediately, and Samuel accompanied him out of the town, and sent the servant on that he might show Saul the word-the counsel or design, of the Lord. What this was we shall see in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 10

*Samuel anoints Saul captain of the Lord's inheritance, 1. Instructs him concerning his return home, whom he should meet, and what he should do, 2-8. Saul meets a company of prophets, the Spirit of the Lord comes on him, and he prophesies among them, 9-13. He meets his uncle, and converses with him, 14-16. Samuel calls the people together to Mizpeh, and upbraids them for having rejected the Lord as their king, 17-19. Lots are cast to find out the person proper to be appointed king; Saul is chosen, 20-24. Samuel shows the manner of the king, and writes it in a book, 25. Saul goes to Gibeah; and certain persons refuse to acknowledge him as king, 26, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1. Took a vial of oil** The reasons of this rite the reader will find largely stated in the note on Exodus 29:7. The anointing mentioned here took place in the open field. See the preceding chapter, 1 Samuel 9:26, 27. How simple was the ancient ceremony of consecrating a king! A prophet or priest poured oil upon his head, and kissed him; and said, Thus the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance. This was the whole of the ceremony. Even in this anointing, Saul is not acknowledged as king, but simply נגיד *nagid*, a captain-one who goes before and leads the people.

**Verse 2. Rachel's sepulcher** This was nigh to Bethlehem. See Genesis 35:19.

**At Zelzah** If this be the name of a place, nothing is known of it.

The Hebrew בצלצח *betseltsach* is translated by the Septuagint αλλομενους μεγαλα, dancing greatly: now this may refer to the joy they felt and expressed on finding the asses, or it may refer to those religious exultations, or playing on instruments of music, mentioned in the succeeding verses.

**Verse 3. *Three men going up to God to Bethel*** Jacob's altar was probably there still, Genesis 28:19. However this might be, it was still considered, as its name implies, the house of God; and to it they were now going, to offer sacrifice.

The three kids were for sacrifice; the three loaves of bread to be offered probably as a thank-offering; and the bottle or skin full of wine, for a libation. When the blood was poured out before the Lord, then they feasted on the flesh and on the bread; and probably had a sufficiency of the wine left for their own drinking.

**Verse 4. *And they will salute thee*** ושאלו לך לשלום veshaalu lecha leshalom, "And they will inquire of thee concerning peace," i.e., welfare. In the East, if this salutation be given, then the person or persons giving it may be reckoned friends; if the others return it, then there is friendship on both sides. Salaam alicum, Peace to you! is the mode of compellation: Alicum essalaam, To you be peace! is the return. If you give the former and receive not the latter, you may expect hostility. The meaning of the prophet is, When you come to the plain of Tabor, ye shall meet three men; you need not be afraid of them, for they are friends; and they will show this friendship, not only by bidding you good speed, but by giving you two loaves of bread, a provision which you will need for the remaining part of your journey.

**Verse 5. *The hill of God*** The Targum says, "The hill on which the ark of the Lord was. Calmet supposes it to be a height near Gibeah.

***The garrison of the Philistines*** Probably they kept a watch on the top of this hill, with a company of soldiers to keep the country in check.

***A company of prophets*** A company of scribes, says the Targum. Probably the scholars of the prophets; for the prophets seem to have been the only accredited teachers, at particular times, in Israel; and at this time there does not appear to have been any other prophet besides Samuel in this quarter. Probably the teacher of this school was not an inspired man, but one acting under the direction of Samuel. Mr. Harmer thinks that the following custom among the Mohammedans greatly illustrates this obscure place: "When the children have gone through the Koran, their relations borrow a fine horse and furniture, and carry them about the town in



procession, with the book in their hand, the rest of their companions following, and all sorts of music of the country going before. Dr. Shaw, in p. 195, mentions the same custom; adding the acclamations of their school-fellows, but taking no notice of the music. We have no reason, however, to doubt the fact on account of the doctor's silence; especially as it relates to another part of Barbary, and is given us by those who resided some years in that country. The doctor makes no use of this circumstance relating to the education of youth in Barbary; but the account of the procession above given seems to be a lively comment on that ancient Jewish custom mentioned in these verses. That the word prophet often signifies sons or scholars of the prophets, and that prophesying often implies singing, has been already remarked; but no author that I know of has given any account of the nature of this procession, or its design. We are sometimes told that high places were used for sacrifices; and in one case music, it is certain, played before them when they went up to worship, Isaiah 30:29. But did they not also return from sacrifice with it? We are told that music was used by the prophets to calm and compose them, and to invite the Divine influences; which is indeed very true. But is it to the purpose? Did they go forth in this manner from their college into the noise and interruptions of the world, to call down the prophetic impulse? But if we consider them as a company of the sons of the prophets, going in procession with songs of praise and music playing before them, and recollect that it is usual in this day for young scholars to go in procession with acclamations and music, the whole mystery seems to be unravelled. To which may be added, that Saul was to meet them, and find himself turned into another man; into a man, perhaps, who is instantaneously made as knowing in the law of God as the youth to whom they were doing the above honors, or any of his convoy; which acquaintance with the law of God was very necessary for one who was to judge among his brethren as their king. For this reason the Jewish kings were to write out a copy of the law of God, and read it continually, that they might be perfect masters of it, Deuteronomy 17:18, 20, which accomplishment some youth had gained whom Saul met with, and who was honored with the solemnity the sacred historian speaks of, if the customs of South Barbary may be supposed to be explanatory of those of Judea."

On the word prophet, and the general account given here, I shall introduce the following illustrations from another work:—

“The word prophet generally conveys the idea of a person so far acquainted with futurity as to discern some purpose of the Divine Being relative to his government of the natural and moral world, but which is not sufficiently matured by the economy of Providence to make, as yet, its public appearance among men, and to prophesy is usually understood to imply the foretelling such an event, the time of its appearance, and the place of its operation, with some preceding and subsequent circumstances. But that this was the original and only meaning of the word prophet or prophesy, is very far from being clear. The first place the word occurs in is Genesis 20:7, where the Lord says of Abraham to Abimelech, He is a prophet, (נְבִיא הוּא) nabi hu,) and will pray (וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל) veyith-pallel, will make earnest intercession) for thee. In the common acceptation of the word it is certain Abraham was no prophet; but here it seems to signify a man well acquainted with the Supreme Being, capable of teaching others in Divine things, and especially a man of prayer—one who had great influence with the God he worshipped, and whose intercessions were available in the behalf of others. And in this sense the original word נְבִיא nabi is used in several places in the Old Testament.

“It was through inattention to this meaning of the word, which appears to me to be the true, original, and ideal one, that all the commentators and critics that I have met with have been so sadly puzzled with that part of the history of Saul which is related 1 Samuel 10:9-13; 19:20-24. In these passages the sacred historian represents Saul, who was neither a prophet nor the son of one, associating with the prophets, and prophesying among them, to which he was led by the Spirit of the Lord which came upon him.

“That this can mean no more here than prayer and supplication to God, accompanied probably with edifying hymns of praise and thanksgiving, (for they had instruments of music, 1 Samuel 10:5,) needs, in my opinion, little proof. If Saul had prophesied in the common acceptation of the word, it is not likely that we should have been kept absolutely in the dark concerning the subject and design of his predictions, of which, by the way, not one syllable is spoken in the oracles of God. The simple fact seems to have been this: God, who had chosen this man to govern Israel, designed to

teach him that the Most High alone is the fountain of power, and that by him only kings could reign so as to execute justice properly, and be his ministers for good to the people. To accomplish this gracious purpose, he gave him another heart (1 Samuel 10:9)-a disposition totally different from what he had ever before possessed, and taught him to pray.

“Coming among the sons of the prophets, on whom the Spirit of the Lord rested, and who were under the instruction of Samuel, (1 Samuel 19:20,) while they worshipped God with music and supplication, Saul also was made a partaker of the same Divine influence, and prophesied, i.e., made prayer and supplication among them. To see one who did not belong to the prophetic school thus incorporated with the prophets, pouring out his soul in prayer and supplication, was an unusual sight, which could not pass unnoticed, especially by those of Saul’s acquaintance who probably knew him in times past to have been as careless and ungodly as themselves, (for it was only now he got that other good Spirit from God, a sufficient proof that he had it not before.) These companions of his, being unacquainted with that grace which can in a moment influence and change the heart, would, according to an invariable custom, express their astonishment with a sneer: Is SAUL also among the prophets? That is, in modern language, ‘Can this man pray or preach? He whose education has been the same as our own, employed in the same secular offices, and formerly companion with us in what he now affects to call folly and sin? Can such a person be among the prophets?’ Yes, for God may have given him a new heart; and the Spirit of God, whose inspiration alone can give sound understanding in sacred things, may have come upon him for this very purpose, that he might announce unto you the righteousness of the Lord, and speak unto your ruined souls to edification, and to exhortation, and to comfort.

“The history of Elijah and the priests of Baal, mentioned in 1 Kings 18:17-40, throws farther light on this subject. In 1 Kings 18:26 it is said, ‘They (the priests of Baal) took a bullock and dressed it, and called on the name of Baal, from morning to noon, saying, O Baal, hear us! And they leaped upon the altar, and cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives, till the blood gushed out; and they prophesied (וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ) vaiyithnabbeu, and they made supplication) until the time of the evening sacrifice.’ From the

whole context it is plain that earnest, importunate prayer, is alone what is meant by prophesying in this text. See also 1 Corinthians 14:3.

“And as all the prophets of God, whose principal business it was to instruct the people in the way of righteousness, were men of prayer, who were continually interceding with God in behalf of those to whom they ministered, the term **נביא** nabi became their proper appellative; and thus a part of their office, intercessors for the people, might have given rise to that name by which the Spirit of God thought proper in after times to distinguish those whom he sent, not only to pray for and instruct the people, but also to predict those future events which concerned the punishment of the incorrigible and the comfort and exaltation of his own servants.” See a sermon which I have printed on 1 Corinthians 14:3, entitled, “The Christian Prophet and his Work; “ and see the note on Genesis 20:7.

A *psaltery* **נבל** nebel. As the word signifies in other places a bottle or flagon, it was probably something like the utricularia tibia or BAG-PIPE. It often occurs both with the Greeks and Romans, and was evidently borrowed from the Hebrews.

A *tabret* **תפ** toph; a sort of drum or cymbal.

A *pipe* **חליל** chalil, from **חל** chal, to make a hole or opening; a sort of pipe, flute, hautboy, clarinet, or the like.

A *harp* **כנור** kinnor; a stringed instrument similar to our harp, or that on the model of which a harp was formed. On these different instruments I shall have occasion to speak more at large when I come to the Psalms.

**Verse 7. *Thou do as occasion serve thee*** After God has shown thee all these signs that thou art under his especial guidance, fear not to undertake any thing that belongs to thy office, for God is with thee.

What a number of circumstances thus precisely foretold! Does not this prove that Samuel was under the continual inspiration of the Almighty?

**Verse 8. *Seven days shalt thou tarry*** I will come to thee within seven days, offer sacrifices, receive directions from the Lord, and deliver them to thee. It is likely that these seven days referred to the time in which Samuel

came to Saul to Gilgal, offered sacrifices, and confirmed the kingdom to him, after he had defeated the Ammonites. See 1 Samuel 11:14, 15.

**Verse 10. *Behold, a company of prophets*** See on 1 Samuel 10:5, etc.

**Verse 12. *But who is their father?*** The Septuagint, in its principal editions, adds **ου κεις**; is it not Kish? This makes the sense more complete.

**Verse 13. *He came to the high place.*** I suppose this to mean the place where Saul's father lived; as it is evident the next verse shows him to be at home.

**Verse 14. *Saul's uncle*** The word **דוד** *dod* signifies a beloved one, love, a lover, friend, etc.; and is the same as David. It is supposed to mean uncle here; but I think it means some familiar friend.

**Verse 18. *I brought up Israel out of Egypt*** These are similar to the upbraidings in 1 Samuel 8:7, etc.

**Verse 19. *Present yourselves-by your tribes*** It appears that, in order to find out the proper person who should be made their king, they must determine by lot: 1. The tribe. 2. The thousands or grand divisions by families. 3. The smaller divisions by families. And, 4. The individual. When the lot was cast for the tribe, Benjamin was taken; when for the thousand, the division of Matri was taken; when for the family, the family of Kish was taken; when for the individual, Saul, the son of Kish, was taken.

**Verse 21. *When they sought him, he could not be found.*** Through modesty or fear he had secreted himself.

**Verse 22. *The Lord answered*** What a continual access to God! and what condescension in his attention to all their requests!

The stuff among which he had secreted himself may mean the carts, baggage, etc., brought by the people to Mizpeh.

**Verse 24. *God save the king.*** There is no such word here; no, nor in the whole Bible; nor is it countenanced by any of the versions. The words which we thus translate here and elsewhere are simply **יחי המלך** *yechi*

hammelech, “May the king live; “ and so all the versions, the Targum excepted, which says, May the king prosper! The French Vive le roi! is a proper version of the Hebrew.

**Verse 25. *The manner of the kingdom*** It is the same word as in 1 Samuel 8:9; and doubtless the same thing is implied as is there related. But possibly there was some kind of compact or covenant between them and Saul; and this was the thing that was written in a book, and laid up before the Lord, probably near the ark.

**Verse 26. *A band of men*** Not a military band, as I imagine, but some secret friends, or companions, who were personally attached to him. Others think that all the men fit to bear arms are intended; but this seems inconsistent with the life that Saul led for some time afterwards; for he appears to have gone into his agricultural concerns, and waited for a call from the Divine providence. See 1 Samuel 11:5.

**Verse 27. *Brought him no presents*** They gave him no proofs that they acknowledged either the Divine appointment or his authority. The Arab chiefs are, to this day, when on a march or excursion of any kind, supplied with every necessary by the free-will offerings or presents of the people in the villages or places where they encamp. Saul was now a public character, and had a right to support from the public. These sons of Belial refused to bear their part; they brought him no presents. He marked it, but at present held his peace; he was as if he were deaf: so says the text. He was prudent, and did not immediately assume all the consequence to which his office entitled him. It is probable, however, that tribute is meant by the word present. The people in general finding they had now a king, took it for granted that they must pay tribute or taxes to him. This was a part of the manner of the king which Samuel had shown them; the great majority had done so, but certain refractory people refused to pay any thing, on the pretense that such a person as Saul could not be a deliverer of Israel. How, say they, shall this man save us?

## CHAPTER 11

*Nahash, king of the Ammonites, besieges Jabesh-gilead; and proposes to its inhabitants the most degrading conditions of peace, 1, 2. They apply to their brethren for help, 3, 4. Saul hears of their distress; takes a yoke of oxen, hews them in pieces, and sends them throughout the coasts of Israel, with the threat that all who did not come to his standard should have his cattle served in like manner; in consequence of which he is soon at the head of an army of three hundred and thirty thousand men, 5-8. He sends to Jabesh-gilead, and promises help, 9, 10. Saul attacks the Ammonites next morning, and gives them a total overthrow, 11. The people are greatly encouraged, and propose to put to death those who are opposed to Saul's government: but this he prevents, 12, 13. Samuel leads the people to Gilgal: they offer sacrifices, and renew the kingdom to Saul, 14, 15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. *Nahash the Ammonite*** In the Vulgate this chapter begins thus: Et factum est quasi post mensem, "And it came to pass about a month after." This addition appears also in the principal copies of the Septuagint; though it is wanting in the Complutensian edition, both in the Greek and Latin, and is not acknowledged by any of the Oriental versions. But it is in Josephus, and probably was inserted from him into some copies of the Septuagint, and thence into the Vulgate. It appears to be of very little authority.

We know little about Nahash; there was a king of this name among the Ammonites in the time of David, 2 Samuel 10:2, but probably not the same person. Nahash might have been a common name of the Ammonitish kings.

***Make a covenant with us*** They found they were in no condition to risk a war; and they wish to have peace, and desire to know his conditions.

**Verse 2. *I may thrust out all your right eyes*** This cruel condition would serve at once as a badge of their slavery, and a means of incapacitating them from being effective warriors. Theodoret observes, “He who opposes his shield to the enemy with his left hand, thereby hides his left eye, and looks at his enemy with his right eye; he therefore who plucks out that right eye makes men useless in war.” Josephus gives the same reason.

**Verse 3. *Give us seven days respite*** Such promises are frequently made by besieged places: “We will surrender if not relieved in so many days;” and such conditions are generally received by the besiegers.

**Verse 4. *Then came the messengers to Gibeah*** It does not appear that the people of Jabesh-gilead knew any thing of Saul’s appointment to the kingdom, for the message is not directed to him but to the people.

***The people lifted up their voices and wept.*** They saw no hope of deliverance, and they expected that their reproach would be laid on all Israel.

**Verse 5. *Saul came after the herd*** He had been bred up to an agricultural life, and after his consecration he returned to it, waiting for a call of Divine providence, which he considered he had now received in the message from Jabesh-gilead.

It has often been remarked, that mighty kings and accomplished generals have been chosen from among those who were engaged in agricultural concerns. In these observations one fact is lost sight of, viz., that in ancient times agriculture was the only employment. Trade and commerce were scarcely known; therefore all descriptions of official dignities must be chosen out of this class, there being no other to choose them from. We need not wonder at these words of the poet:—

Jura dabat populis posito modo consul aratro; Pascebatque suas ipse senator oves.

“The consul, having now laid aside his plough, gives laws to the people; And the senator himself feeds his own sheep.” OVID, *Fast.* lib. i., v. 204-207.

**Verse 6. *The Spirit of God came upon Saul*** He felt himself strongly excited to attempt the relief of his brethren.



**And his anger was kindled greatly.** I believe this means no more than that his courage was greatly excited-he felt himself strong for fight, and confident of success.

**Verse 7. He took a yoke of open** The sending the pieces of the oxen was an act similar to that of the Levite, Judges 19:29, where see the note. And both customs are similar to the sending about of the bloody cross, to call the clans to battle, practiced by the ancient Highlanders of Scotland. See at the end of this chapter. {1 Samuel 11:15}

**Verse 8. The children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.** This was a vast army, but the Septuagint make it even more: “All the men of Israel were **εξακοσιας χιλιαδας**, SIX HUNDRED thousand; and the men of Judah **εβδομηκοντα χιλιαδας**, SEVENTY thousand.” Josephus goes yet higher with the number of the Israelites: “He found the number of those whom he had gathered together to be **εβδομηκοντα μυριαδας** SEVEN HUNDRED thousand.” Those of the tribe of Judah he makes seventy thousand, with the Septuagint. These numbers are not all right; and I suspect even the Hebrew text to be exaggerated, by the mistake or design of some ancient scribe.

**Verse 10. To-morrow we will come out unto you** They concealed the information they had received of Saul’s promised assistance. They did come out unto them; but it was in a different manner to what the Ammonites expected.

**Verse 11. Put the people in three companies** Intending to attack the Ammonites in three different points, and to give his own men more room to act.

**In the morning watch** He probably began his march in the evening, passed Jordan in the night, and reached the camp of the Ammonites by daybreak.

**That two of them were not left together.** This proves that the rout was complete.

**Verse 12. Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign** Now, flushed with victory and proud of their leader, they wished to give him a proof of their attachment by slaying, even in cool blood, the persons who were at first

averse from his being intrusted with the supreme power! The common soldier is scarcely ever inspired by his victory to acts of magnanimity; he has shed blood—he wishes to shed more!

**Verse 13. *There shall not a man be put to death*** This was as much to Saul's credit as the lately proposed measure was to the discredit of his soldiers.

**Verse 14. *Renew the kingdom*** The unction of Saul, in the first instance, was a very private act; and his being appointed to be king was not known to the people in general. He had now shown himself worthy to command the people; and Samuel takes advantage of this circumstance to gain the general consent in his favor. Josephus says that Saul was anointed a second time at this convocation.

**Verse 15. *There they made Saul king*** It is likely, from these words, that Saul was anointed a second time; he was now publicly acknowledged, and there was no gainsayer. Thus far Saul acted well, and the kingdom seemed to be confirmed in his hand; but soon through imprudence he lost it.

ON the custom referred to in 1 Samuel 11:7 I am favored with the following observations by a learned correspondent:—

“It is considered that the authenticity of records respecting a peculiar people cannot be better illustrated, or the fidelity of the historian more clearly ascertained, than by proving that the manners and customs recorded are in unison with, or bear a resemblance to, the manners and customs of other nations of the same antiquity; or, what may be more correct, in a similar state of improvement; and the records of such rites and customs may possibly acquire an additional mark of authenticity, when the similarity is not so exact as to admit a presumption that the customs of one nation were merely copied from the other.

“Sir Walter Scott, in the third canto of the *Lady of the Lake*, describes the rites, incantations, and imprecations, used prior to the fiery cross being circulated, to summon the rough warriors of ancient times to the service of their chief; and in the first note of this canto he alludes to this ancient custom which, in comparatively modern times, has been used in Scotland, and proves that a similar punishment of death or destruction of the houses for disobeying the summons was inflicted by the ancient Scandinavians, as

recorded by Olaus Magnus, in his history of the Goths. A custom still more in point than the one cited may be found to have existed in a more ancient nation, whose history is supposed the most, if not the only authentic narrative of deeds of ancient times, and which also records the sanguinary manners of uncultivated nations; see the preceding chapter, first eight verses. {1 Samuel 10:1-8} The similarity of the custom is to be found in the seventh verse; with the Highlanders a goat was slain; with the Israelites, an ox. The exhibition of a cross stained with the blood of the sacrificed animal was the summons of the former, while part of the animal was the mandate of the latter. Disobedience in the one nation was punished with the death of the parties, and burning of their dwellings; in the other, the punishment was more simple, and more allusive to the sacrificed emblem, the forfeiture or destruction of their oxen. It is not difficult to judge whether the comparison be correct.

“The first verses record the sanguinary practices of ancient times, which to many appear merely as the gratification of revenge, or as proofs of victory; yet when it is considered that the right eye must chiefly aid the warrior in aiming at his adversary, whether the weapon be of ancient or modern warfare, here arises a military reason, corroborative of the truth of history, for the deprivation, and in some degree lessening the cruelty of the mutilation, which would be increased if it were caused by revenge or wantonness; though Nahash declares it to be a reproach upon all Israel.”

## CHAPTER 12

*Samuel, grown old, testifies his integrity before the people, which they confirm, 1-5. He reproves them for their ingratitude and disobedience; and gives a summary of the history of their fathers, 6-12. He exhorts them to future obedience, and calls for a sign from heaven to confirm his authority, and to show them their disobedience: God sends an extraordinary thunder and rain, 13-19. He warns them against idolatry, and exhorts to obedience, and promises to intercede for them, 20-23. Sums up their duty, and concludes with a solemn warning, 24, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1. *And Samuel said*** It is very likely that it was at this public meeting Samuel delivered the following address; no other time seems to be given for it, and this is the most proper that could be chosen.

**Verse 2. *My sons are with you*** It is generally agreed that these words intimate that Samuel had deprived them of their public employ, and reduced them to a level with the common people.

***Have walked before you from my childhood*** He had been a long, steady, and immaculate servant of the public.

**Verse 3. *Witness against me*** Did ever a minister of state, in any part of the world, resign his office with so much self-consciousness of integrity, backed with the universal approbation of the public? No man was oppressed under his government, no man defrauded! He had accumulated no riches for himself; he had procured none for his friends; nor had one needy dependant been provided for out of the public purse. He might have pardoned his own sons, who had acted improperly, before he quitted the government; but though he was the most tender of parents, he would not, but abandoned them to national justice, with only a tacit solicitation of mercy: Behold, my sons are with you! They have acted improperly; I deprived them of their authority; they are amenable to you for their past conduct; I have walked uprightly and disinterestedly among you; they

have not followed my steps: but can you forgive them for their father's sake? As a minister of justice, he abandons them to their fate; as a tender father, he indirectly and modestly pleads for them on the ground of his own services. Had he not acted thus in both these relations, he would have been unworthy of that character which he so deservedly bears.

**Verse 4. *They said, Thou hast not defrauded*** Of what minister or governor can any nation under heaven say such things?

**Verse 7. *Now therefore stand still*** I have arraigned myself before God and you; I now arraign you before God.

**Verse 8. *The Lord sent Moses and Aaron*** He shows them that through all their history God had ever raised them up deliverers, when their necessities required such interference.

**Verse 9. *The hand of Sisera*** See these transactions in the book of Judges, as marked in the margin; and see the notes on those passages.

**Verse 11. *Jerubbaal*** That is, Gideon. And Bedan: instead of Bedan, whose name occurs nowhere else as a judge or deliverer of Israel, the Septuagint have Barak; the same reading is found in the Syriac and Arabic. The Targum has Samson. Many commentators are of this opinion; but Calmet thinks that Jair is intended, who judged Israel twenty-two years, Judges 10:3.

Instead of Samuel the Syriac and Arabic have Samson; and it is most natural to suppose that Samuel does not mention himself in this place. St. Paul's authority confirms these alterations: The time would fail me, says he, to tell of Gideon, of Barak, of Samson, of Jephthah, of David, etc.

**Verse 12. *When ye saw that Nahash*** This was not the first time they had demanded a king; see before, 1 Samuel 8:5. But at the crisis mentioned here they became more importunate; and it was in consequence of this that the kingdom was a second time confirmed to Saul. Saul was elected at Mizpeh, he was confirmed at Gilgal.

**Verse 14. *If ye will fear the Lord, etc.*** On condition that ye rebel no more, God will take you and your king under his merciful protection, and he and his kingdom shall be confirmed and continued.

**Verse 16. *This great thing*** This unusual occurrence.

**Verse 17. *Is it not wheat harvest to-day?*** That is, This is the time of wheat harvest. According to St. Jerome, who spent several years in the promised land, this harvest commenced about the end of June or beginning of July, in which he says he never saw rain in Judea: Nunquam enim in fine mensis Junii, sive in mense Julio, in his provinciis, maximeque in Judea, pluvias vidimus. — HIER. in Amos 4:7; where he refers to this very history. What occurred now hardly ever occurs there but in the winter months.

**Verse 18. *The Lord sent thunder and rain that day*** This was totally unusual; and, as it came at the call of Samuel, was a most evident miracle.

***Greatly feared the Lord*** They dreaded His terrible majesty; and they feared Samuel, perceiving that he had so much power with God.

**Verse 19. *Pray for thy servants-that we die not*** As they knew they had rebelled against God, they saw that they had every thing to fear from his justice and power.

***We have added unto all our sins this evil*** It is no sin to have a king; a good king is one of the greatest blessings of God's providence; but it is a sin to put a man in the place of God. Is it not strange that they did not now attempt to repair their fault? They might have done it, but they did not; they acknowledged their sin, but did not put it away. This is the general way of mankind. "God help us, we are all sinners!" is the general language of all people: but though to be a sinner is to be in the most solemn and awful circumstances, yet they are contented to bear the character, heedless of the consequences!

**Verse 20. *Ye have done all this wickedness*** That is, although ye have done all this wickedness: what was past God would pass by, provided they would be obedient in future.

**Verse 21. *After vain things*** That is, idols; which he calls here **הַתְּהוֹ** hattohu, the same expression found Genesis 1:2. The earth was **תְּהוֹ** tohu; it was waste, empty, and formless: so idols; they are confusion, and things of naught, for an idol is nothing in the world-it is not the representative of any intelligent being.

**Verse 22. *The Lord will not forsake his people*** He will not as yet cast you off, though you have deserved it. His purpose in preserving them in their land and religion was not yet accomplished. It was not however for their sake that he would not cast them off, but for his own great name's sake. He drew his reasons from himself.

**Verse 23. *God forbid that I should sin*** They had earnestly begged him, 1 Samuel 12:19, to pray to God for them, that they might not die; and he tells them that he should consider himself a sinner, should he cease to be their intercessor.

***But I will teach you the good and the right way*** I will show you, as long as I am with you, what true religion is; it is the way to happiness and heaven. It is right-there is no crookedness in it; it is good-there is no evil in it.

**Verse 24. *Only fear the Lord*** Know, respect, and reverence him.

***Serve him*** Consider him your Lord and Master; consider yourselves his servants.

***In truth*** Be ever honest, ever sincere; with all your heart-have every affection engaged in the work of obedience; act not merely from a principle of duty, but also from a pious, affectionate sense of obligation. Act towards your God as an affectionate child should act towards a tender and loving parent.

***Consider how great things*** Review the history of your fathers, review your own life; see what interpositions of power, mercy, goodness, and truth, God has displayed in your behalf! Has he not daily loaded you with his benefits?

**Verse 25. *Ye shall be consumed*** If ye do wickedly you shall be destroyed, your kingdom destroyed, and your king destroyed. Here they had set before them life and good, death and evil. Never was a people more fully warned, and never did a people profit less by the warning; and they continue to this day monuments of God's justice and forbearance. Reader, What art thou? Perhaps a similar monument. Consider therefore what great things God has done for thee.

## CHAPTER 13

*Saul chooses a body of troops, 1, 2. Jonathan smites a garrison of the Philistines, 3, 4. The Philistines gather together an immense host against Israel, 5. The Israelites are afraid; and some hide themselves in caves, and others flee over Jordan, 6, 7. Samuel delaying his coming, Saul offers sacrifice, 8, 9. Samuel comes and reproves him, and Saul excuses himself, 10-12. Samuel shows him that God has rejected him from being captain over his people, 13, 14. Samuel departs; and Saul and Jonathan, with six hundred men abide in Gibeah, 15, 16. The Philistines send out foraging companies, and waste the land, 17, 18. Desolate state of the Israelitish army, having no weapons of defense against their enemies, 19-23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. *Saul reigned one year*** A great deal of learned labor has been employed and lost on this verse, to reconcile it with propriety and common sense. I shall not recount the meanings put on it. I think this clause belongs to the preceding chapter, either as a part of the whole, or a chronological note added afterwards; as if the writer had said, These things (related in 1 Samuel 12:1-25) took place in the first year of Saul's reign: and then he proceeds in the next place to tell us what took place in the second year, the two most remarkable years of Saul's reign. In the first he is appointed, anointed, and twice confirmed, viz., at Mizpeh and at Gilgal; in the second, Israel is brought into the lowest state of degradation by the Philistines, Saul acts unconstitutionally, and is rejected from being king. These things were worthy of an especial chronological note.

***And when he had reigned*** This should begin the chapter, and be read thus: "And when Saul had reigned two years over Israel, he chose him three thousand," &c. The Septuagint has left the clause out of the text entirely, and begins the chapter thus: "And Saul chose to himself three thousand men out of the men of Israel."



**Verse 2. *Two thousand were with Saul*** Saul, no doubt, meditated the redemption of his country from the Philistines; and having chosen three thousand men, he thought best to divide them into companies, and send one against the Philistine garrison at Michmash, another against that at Beth-el, and the third against that at Gibeah: he perhaps hoped, by surprising these garrisons, to get swords and spears for his men, of which we find, (1 Samuel 13:22,) they were entirely destitute.

**Verse 3. *Jonathan smote*** He appears to have taken this garrison by surprise, for his men had no arms for a regular battle, or taking the place by storm. This is the first place in which this brave and excellent man appears; a man who bears one of the most amiable characters in the Bible.

***Let the Hebrews hear.*** Probably this means the people who dwelt beyond Jordan, who might very naturally be termed here העברים haibrim, from עבר abar, he passed over; those who are beyond the river Jordan: as Abraham was called עברי Ibrî because he dwelt beyond the river Euphrates.

**Verse 4. *The people were called together*** The smiting of this garrison was the commencement of a war, and in effect the shaking off of the Philistine yoke; and now the people found that they must stand together, and fight for their lives.

**Verse 5. *Thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen*** There is no proportion here between the chariots and the cavalry. The largest armies ever brought into the field, even by mighty emperors, never were furnished with thirty thousand chariots.

I think שלשים sheloshim, THIRTY, is a false reading for שלש shalosh, THREE. The Syriac has (Syriac) telotho alpin, and the Arabic (Arabic) thalathato alf, both signifying THREE thousand; and this was a fair proportion to the horsemen. This is most likely to be the true reading.

**Verse 6. *The people did hide themselves*** They, being few in number, and totally unarmed as to swords and spears, were terrified at the very numerous and well-appointed army of the Philistines. Judea was full of rocks, caves, thickets, etc., where people might shelter themselves from

their enemies. While some hid themselves, others fled beyond Jordan: and those who did cleave to Saul followed him trembling.

**Verse 8. *He tarried seven days according to the set time*** Samuel in the beginning had told Saul to wait seven days, and he would come to him, and show him what to do, 1 Samuel 10:8. What is here said cannot be understood of that appointment, but of a different one. Samuel had at this time promised to come to him within seven days, and he kept his word, for we find him there before the day was ended; but as Saul found he did not come at the beginning of the seventh day, he became impatient, took the whole business into his own hand, and acted the parts of prophet, priest, and king; and thus he attempted a most essential change in the Israelitish constitution. In it the king, the prophet, and the priest, are in their nature perfectly distinct. What such a rash person might have done, if he had not been deprived of his authority, who can tell? But his conduct on this occasion sufficiently justifies that deprivation. That he was a rash and headstrong man is also proved by his senseless adjuration of the people about food, 1 Samuel 14:24, and his unfeeling resolution to put the brave Jonathan, his own son, to death, because he had unwittingly acted contrary to this adjuration, 1 Samuel 14:44. Saul appears to have been a brave and honest man, but he had few of those qualities which are proper for a king, or the governor of a people.

**Verse 9. *And he offered the burnt-offering.*** This was most perfectly unconstitutional; he had no authority to offer, or cause to be offered, any of the Lord's sacrifices.

**Verse 10. *Behold, Samuel came*** Samuel was punctual to his appointment; one hour longer of delay would have prevented every evil, and by it no good would have been lost. How often are the effects of precipitation fatal!

**Verse 11. *And Saul said*** Here he offers three excuses for his conduct: 1. The people were fast leaving his standard. 2. Samuel did not come at the time, **למועד** lemoed; at the very commencement of the time he did not come, but within that time he did come. 3. The Philistines were coming fast upon him. Saul should have waited out the time; and at all events he should not have gone contrary to the counsel of the Lord.

**Verse 12. *I forced myself*** It was with great reluctance that I did what I did. In all this Saul was sincere, but he was rash, and regardless of the precept of the Lord, which precept or command he most evidently had received, 1 Samuel 13:13. And one part of this precept was, that the Lord should tell him what he should do. Without this information, in an affair under the immediate cognizance of God, he should have taken no step.

**Verse 14. *The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart*** That this man was David is sufficiently clear from the sequel. But in what sense was he a man after God's own heart? Answer: 1. In his strict attention to the law and worship of God. 2. In his admitting, in the whole of his conduct, that God was King in Israel, and that he himself was but his vicegerent. 3. In never attempting to alter any of those laws, or in the least change the Israelitish constitution. 4. In all his public official conduct he acted according to the Divine mind, and fulfilled the will of his Maker: thus was he a man after God's own heart. In reference to his private or personal moral conduct, the word is never used. This is the sense alone in which the word is used here and elsewhere; and it is unfair and wicked to put another meaning on it in order to ridicule the revelation of God, as certain infidels have done.

**Verse 15. *And Samuel arose*** Though David, in the Divine purpose, is appointed to be captain over the people, yet Saul is not to be removed from the government during his life; Samuel therefore accompanies him to Gibeah, to give him the requisite help in this conjuncture.

***About six hundred men.*** The whole of the Israelitish army at this time, and not one sword or spear among them!

**Verse 17. *The spoilers came out*** The Philistines, finding that the Israelites durst not hazard a battle, divided their army into three bands, and sent them in three different directions to pillage and destroy the country. Jonathan profited by this circumstance, and attacked the remains of the army at Michmash, as we shall see in the succeeding chapter.

**Verse 19. *Now there was no smith found*** It is very likely that in the former wars the Philistines carried away all the smiths from Israel, as Porsenna did in the peace which he granted to the Romans, not permitting any iron to be forged except for the purposes of agriculture: "Nehemiah

ferro, nisi in agricultura, uterentur.” The Chaldeans did the same to the Jews in the time of Nebuchadnezzar; they carried away all the artificers, 2 Kings 24:14; Jeremiah 24:1; 29:2. And in the same manner did Cyrus treat the Lydians, Herod. lib. i., c. 145. See several examples in Calmet.

**Verse 20. *But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines*** We find from this that they did not grant them as much as Porsenna did to the Romans; he permitted the people to manufacture the implements of husbandry.

**Verse 21. *Yet they had a file*** The Hebrew פצירה *petsirah*, from פצר *patsar*, to rub hard, is translated very differently by the versions and by critics. Our translation may be as likely as any: they permitted them the use of files, (I believe the word means grindstone,) to restore the blunted edges of their tridents axes, and goads.

**Verse 22. *In the day of battle-these was neither sword nor spear*** But if the Israelites enjoyed such profound peace and undisturbed dominion under Samuel, how is it that they were totally destitute of arms, a state which argues the lowest circumstances of oppression and vassalage? In answer to this we may observe, that the bow and the sling were the principal arms of the Israelites; for these they needed no smith: the most barbarous nations, who have never seen iron, have nevertheless bows and arrows; the arrow heads generally made of flint. Arrows of this kind are found among the inhabitants of the South Sea islands; and even axes, and different implements of war, all made of stone, cut and polished by stone, are frequent among them. The arms of the aboriginal Irish have been of this kind. I have frequently seen heads of axes and arrows of stone, which have been dug up out of the ground, formed with considerable taste and elegance. The former the common people term thunderbolts; the latter, elf-stones. Several of these from Ireland, from Zetland, and from the South Sea islands, are now before me.

Now it is possible that the Israelites had still bows and arrows: these they could have without the smith; and it is as likely that they had slings, and for these they needed none. But then these were missiles; if they came into close fight, they would avail them nothing: for attacks of this kind they would require swords and spears; of these none were found but with Saul and Jonathan.

WE see, in this chapter, Israel brought to as low a state as they were under Eli; when they were totally discomfited, their priests slain, their ark taken, and the judge dead. After that, they rose by the strong hand of God; and in this way they are now to rise, principally by means of David, whose history will soon commence.

## CHAPTER 14

*Jonathan and his armor-bearer purpose to attack a garrison of the Philistines, 1. Saul and his army, with Ahiah the priest, tarry in Gibeah, 2, 3. Jonathan plans his attack of the Philistine garrison, 4-10. He and his armor-bearer climb over a rock: attack and rout the garrison, 11-15. Saul and his company, seeing confusion on the Philistine host, come out against them; as did the men who had hidden themselves; and the Philistines are defeated, 16-23. Saul lays every man under a curse who shall eat food until the evening; in consequence of which the people are sorely distressed, 24-26. Jonathan, not hearing the adjuration, eats a little honey, which he found on the ground, 27-30. The Philistines being defeated, the people seize on the spoil, and begin to eat flesh without previously bleeding the animals, which Saul endeavors to prevent, 31-34. He builds an altar there, 35. Inquires of the Lord if he may pursue the Philistines by night, but receives no answer, 36, 37. Attributes this to some sin committed by some unknown person: makes inquiry by lot; and finds that Jonathan had tasted the honey, on which he purposes to put him to death, 38-44. The people interpose, and rescue Jonathan, 45. Saul fights against the Moabites, Ammonites, and Amalekites, 46-48. An account of the family of Saul, 49-52.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 1. *Come, and let us go over*** This action of Jonathan was totally contrary to the laws of war; no military operation should be undertaken without the knowledge and command of the general. But it is likely that he was led to this by a Divine influence.

The armor-bearer is the origin of what we call esquire, from escu, old French, a shield; armiger is the Latin, from arma, weapons, and gero, I bear. In the times of chivalry, the armiger, or esquire, was the servant of the knight who went after him, and carried his lance, shield, etc. It is now (strange to tell!) a title of honor.

**Verse 2. *Under a pomegranate tree*** Under Rimmon, which not only signifies a pomegranate tree, but also a strong rock, in which six hundred Benjamites took shelter, Judges 20:45. Probably it was in this very rock that Saul and his six hundred men now lay hidden.

**Verse 3. *Ahiah, the son of Ahitub*** Phinehas, son of Eli the high priests had two sons, Ahitub and I-chabod; the latter was born when the ark was taken, and his mother died immediately after. Ahiah is also called Ahimelech, 1 Samuel 22:9.

***Wearing an ephod.*** That is, performing the functions of the high priest. This man does not appear to have been with Saul when he offered the sacrifices, 1 Samuel 13:9, etc.

**Verse 4. *The name of the one was Bozez*** Slippery; and the name of the other Seneh, treading down. — Targum.

**Verse 6. *Let us go over*** Moved, doubtless, by a Divine impulse.

***There is no restraint to the Lord*** This is a fine sentiment; and where there is a promise of defense and support, the weakest, in the face of the strongest enemy, may rely on it with the utmost confidence.

**Verse 7. *Behold, I am with thee*** I shall accompany thee whithersoever thou goest, and share all thy dangers.

**Verse 9. *If they say thus unto us*** Jonathan had no doubt asked this as a sign from God; exactly as Eliezer the servant of Abraham did, Genesis 24:12.

**Verse 12. *Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.*** This was the favorable sign which Jonathan had requested. The Philistines seem to have meant, Come, and we will show you how well fortified we are, and how able to quell all the attacks of your countrymen.

**Verse 13. *Jonathan climbed up*** It seems he had a part of the rock still to get over. When he got over he began to slay the guards, which were about twenty in number, these were of a sort of outpost or advanced guard to the garrison.

***Slew after him*** Jonathan knocked them down, and the armor-bearer despatched them. This seems to be the meaning.

**Verse 14. *A half acre of land*** The ancients measured land by the quantum which a yoke of oxen could plough in a day. The original is obscure, and is variously understood. It is probably a proverbial expression for a very small space.

**Verse 15. *There was trembling in the host*** They were terrified and panic-struck; the people in general round about, those in the garrison, the spoilers, and the whole country, were struck with terror; the commotion was universal and most extraordinary. The trembling of the earth is probably not to be taken literally, but as a metaphor for a great commotion in the country, though God might have interposed in an extraordinary manner, and produced a real earthquake; but their being panic-struck was sufficient to produce all the requisite confusion and dismay.

**Verse 16. *The watchmen of Saul*** Those who were sent out as scouts to observe the motions of the army.

***Melted away*** There was no order in the Philistine camp, and the people were dispersing in all directions. The Vulgate has, *Et ecce multitudo prostrata*, “And behold the multitude were prostrate;” many lay dead upon the field, partly by the sword of Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and partly by the swords of each other, 1 Samuel 14:20.

**Verse 17. *Number now*** Saul perceived that the Philistines were routed, but could not tell by what means; supposing that it must be by some of his own troops, he called a muster to see who and how many were absent.

**Verse 18. *Bring hither the ark of God*** He wished to inquire what use he should make of the present favorable circumstances, and to proceed in the business as God should direct.

**Verse 19. *While Saul talked unto the priest*** Before he had made an end of consulting him, the increasing noise of the panic-struck Philistines called his attention; and finding there was no time to lose, he immediately collected his men and fell on them.

**Verse 21. *The Hebrews that were with the Philistines*** We may understand such as they held in bondage, or who were their servants. Instead of Hebrews the Septuagint read, *οι δουλοι*, the slaves; from which it is evident that, instead of *עִבְרִים* Ibrim, Hebrews, they found in



their text עבדים abadim, servants. But this reading is not countenanced by any other version, nor by any MS. yet discovered.

**Verse 22. *The men-which had hid themselves*** See 1 Samuel 13:6.

The Vulgate and the Septuagint add here, And there were with Saul about ten thousand men; but this is supported by no other authority.

**Verse 24. *Saul had adjured the people*** He was afraid, if they waited to refresh themselves, the Philistines would escape out of their hands, and therefore he made the taking any food till sunset a capital crime. This was the very means of defeating his own intention; for as the people were exhausted for want of food, they could not continue the pursuit of their enemies: had it not been for this foolish adjuration, there had been a greater slaughter of the Philistines, 1 Samuel 14:30.

**Verse 25. *There was honey upon the ground*** There were many wild bees in that country, and Judea is expressly said to be a land flowing with milk and honey.

**Verse 26. *The honey dropped*** It seems to have dropped from the trees on the ground. Honey dews, as they are called, are not uncommon in most countries; and this appears to have been something of this kind. I have seen honey in considerable quantity on the trees and long grass in the fields, and have often eaten of it.

**Verse 27. *His eyes were enlightened.*** Hunger and fatigue affect and dim the sight; on taking food, this affection is immediately removed. This most people know to be a fact.

**Verse 31. *They smote the Philistines -from Mishmash to Aijalon*** The distance Calmet states to be three or four leagues.

**Verse 32. *The people did eat them with the blood.*** They were faint through hunger, and did not take time to bleed the cattle on which they fed. This was another bad effect of Saul's rash adjuration.

**Verse 33. *Roll a great stone unto me*** Probably this means that they should set up an altar to the Lord, on which the animals might be properly slain, and the blood poured out upon the earth; and a large stone was erected for an altar.

**Verse 35. *Saul built an altar*** And this we are informed was the first he had built; Samuel, as prophet had hitherto erected the altars, and Saul thought he had sufficient authority to erect one himself without the prophet, as he once offered sacrifice without him.

**Verse 36. *Then said the priest*** It is evident that Ahiah doubted the propriety of pursuing the Philistines that night; and as a reverse of fortune might be ruinous after such a victory, he wished to have specific directions from the Lord.

**Verse 37. *He answered him not that day.*** Why was this answer delayed? Surely Jonathan's eating the honey was no sin. This could not have excited God's displeasure. And yet the lot found out Jonathan! But did this argue that he had incurred guilt in the sight of God? I answer: It did not; for Jonathan was delivered, by the authority of the people, from his father's rash curse; no propitiation is offered for his supposed transgression to induce God to pardon it; nor do we find any displeasure of God manifested on the occasion. See below.

**Verse 41. *Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot.*** Both the Vulgate and Septuagint add much to this verse: And Saul said to the Lord God of Israel, Lord God of Israel, give judgment. Why is it that thou hast not answered thy servant to-day? If the iniquity be in me, or Jonathan my son, make it manifest. Or if this iniquity be in thy people, give sanctification.

**Verse 42. *And Jonathan was taken.*** The object of the inquiry most evidently was, "Who has gone contrary to the king's adjuration today?" The answer to that must be JONATHAN. But was this a proof of the Divine displeasure against the man? By no means: the holy oracle told the truth, but neither that oracle nor the God who gave it fixed any blame upon Jonathan, and his own conscience acquits him. He seeks not pardon from God, because he is conscious he had not transgressed. But why did not God answer the priest that day? Because he did not think it proper to send the people by night in pursuit of the vanquished Philistines. Saul's motive was perfectly vindictive: Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them unto the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them; that is, Let us burn, waste, destroy, and slay all before us! Was it right to indulge a disposition of this kind, which would have led to the destruction of many innocent country people, and of many Israelites who resided

among the Philistines? Besides, was there not a most manifest reason in the people why God could not be among them? Multitudes of them were defiled in a very solemn manner; they had eaten the flesh with the blood; and however sacrifices might be offered to atone for this transgression of the law, they must continue unclean till the evening. Here were reasons enough why God would not go on with the people for that night.

**Verse 44. *And Saul answered-thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.*** To save thy rash oath! So must John Baptist's head be taken off at the desire of an impure woman, because a Herod had sworn to give her whatever she might request! Unfeeling brute! However, the king was JUDGE. But what said the people, who were the JURY?

**Verse 45. *And the people said*** "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid! As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground." Here was a righteous and impartial jury, who brought in a verdict according to the evidence: No man should die but for a breach of the law of God; but Jonathan hath not broken any law of God; therefore Jonathan should not die. And because he should not, therefore he shall not.

***He hath wrought with God this day.*** God has been commander-in-chief; Jonathan has acted under his directions.

***So the people rescued Jonathan*** And God testified no displeasure; and perhaps he permitted all this that he might correct Saul's propensity to rashness and precipitancy.

**Verse 47. *So Saul took the kingdom*** The Targum appears to give the meaning of this expression: "Saul prospered in his government over Israel." And the proofs of his prosperity are immediately subjoined.

***Fought against all his enemies*** Of the wars which are mentioned here we have no particulars; they must have endured a long time, and have been, at least in general, successful.

**Verse 48. *Smote the Amalekites.*** This war is mentioned in the following chapter.

**Verse 49. *Now the sons of Saul*** We do not find Ishbosheth here. Calmet says it was "because he was too young, and did not go with him to the

war, for he mentions only those who were with him.” Why then mention his daughters and his wife? Did they go with him to the war?

**Verse 52. *When Saul saw any strong man*** This was very politic. He thus continued to recruit his army with strong and effective men.

## CHAPTER 15

*Samuel sends Saul to destroy the Amalekites, and all their substance, 1-3. Saul collects an immense army and comes against their city, 4, 5. He desires the Kenites to remove from among the Amalekites, 6. He smites the Amalekites, and takes their king, Agag, prisoner, and saves the best of the spoil, 7-9. The Lord is displeased, and sends Samuel to reprove him, 10, 11. The conversation between Samuel and Saul, in which the latter endeavors to justify his conduct, 12-23. He is convinced that he has done wrong, and asks pardon, 24-31. Samuel causes Agag to be slain; for which he assigns the reasons, 32-35.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1.** *The Lord sent me to anoint thee* This gave him a right to say what immediately follows.

**Verse 2.** *I remember that which Amalek did* The Amalekites were a people of Arabia Petraea, who had occupied a tract of country on the frontiers of Egypt and Palestine. They had acted with great cruelty towards the Israelites on their coming out of Egypt. (See Exodus 17:8, and the notes there.) They came upon them when they were faint and weary, and smote the hindermost of the people—those who were too weak to keep up with the rest. (See Deuteronomy 25:18.) And God then purposed that Amalek, as a nation, should be blotted out from under heaven; which purpose was now fulfilled by Saul upwards of four hundred years afterwards!

**Verse 3.** *Slay both man and woman* Nothing could justify such an exterminating decree but the absolute authority of God. This was given: all the reasons of it we do not know; but this we know well, The Judge of all the earth doth right. This war was not for plunder, for God commanded that all the property as well as all the people should be destroyed.

**Verse 4.** *Two hundred thousand—and ten thousand* The Septuagint, in the London Polyglot, have FOUR HUNDRED thousand companies of Israel,

and THIRTY thousand companies of Judah. The Codex Alexandrinus has TEN thousand of each. The Complutensian Polyglot has TWO HUNDRED thousand companies of Israel, and TEN thousand of Judah. And Josephus has FOUR HUNDRED thousand of Israel, and THIRTY thousand of Judah. All the other versions are the same with the Hebrew text; and there is no difference in the MSS.

**Verse 5. *Saul came to a city of Amalek*** I believe the original should be translated, and Saul came to the city Amalek; their capital being called by the name of their tribe.

**Verse 6. *Said unto the Kenites*** The Kenites were an ancient people. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was a Kenite. Hobab his son (if the same person be not meant) was guide to the Hebrews through the wilderness. They had a portion of the promised land, near to the city Arad. See Judges 1:16; and for more particulars concerning them and the Amalekites, see the notes on Numbers 26:20, 21.

**Verse 7. *From Havilah-to Shur*** From Pelusium in Egypt, unto the Red Sea. — Josephus. But Havilah lay eastward from the Red Sea; the Amalekites lay between this and the way to Egypt towards Shur.

**Verse 11. *It repenteth me that I have set up Saul*** That is, I placed him on the throne; I intended, if he had been obedient, to have established his kingdom. He has been disobedient; I change my purpose, and the kingdom shall not be established in his family. This is what is meant by God's repenting-changing a purpose according to conditions already laid down or mentally determined.

**Verse 12. *He set him up a place*** Literally, a hand, **7** yad. Some say it was a monument; others, a triumphal arch: probably it was no more than a hand, pointing out the place where Saul had gained the victory. Absalom's pillar is called the hand of Absalom, 2 Samuel 18:18.

**Verse 15. *The people spared the best of the sheep*** It is very likely that the people did spare the best of the prey; and it is as likely that Saul might have restrained them if he would. That they might not love war, God had interdicted spoil and plunder, so the war was undertaken merely from a sense of duty, without any hope of enriching themselves by it.

**Verse 17. *Little in thine own sight*** Who can bear prosperity? Is it not of the Lord's great goodness that the majority of the inhabitants of the earth are in comparative poverty?

**Verse 21. *To sacrifice unto the Lord*** Thus he endeavors to excuse the people. They did not take the spoil in order to enrich themselves by it, but to sacrifice unto the Lord; and did not this motive justify their conduct?

**Verse 22. *Hath the Lord as great delight, etc.*** This was a very proper answer to, and refutation of Saul's excuse. Is not obedience to the will of God the end of all religion, of its rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices?

**Verse 23. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*** This is no translation of those difficult words,

כִּי חַטָּאת קֶסֶם מֵרִי וְאוֹ תֵרָפִים הַפְּצָר ki chattath kesem meri veaven

utheraphim haptsar. It appears to me that the three nouns which occur first in the text refer each to the three last in order. Thus, חַטָּאת chattath,

TRANSGRESSION, refers to אָוֶן aven, INIQUITY, which is the principle

whence transgression springs. קֶסֶם kesem, DIVINATION, refers to תֵרָפִים

teraphim, consecrated images or telesms, vulgarly talismans, used in

incantations. And מֵרִי meri, REBELLION, refers evidently to הַפְּצָר

haphstar, STUBBORNNESS, whence rebellion springs. The meaning therefore

of this difficult place may be the following: As transgression comes from

iniquity, divination from teraphim, and rebellion from stubbornness, so,

because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee

from being king. All the versions are different.

**Verse 24. *I have sinned-because I feared the people*** This was the best excuse he could make for himself; but had he feared GOD more, he need have feared the PEOPLE less.

**Verse 25. *Pardon my sin*** Literally, bear my sin; take it away; forgive what I have done against thee, and be my intercessor with God, that he may forgive my offense against him; turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.

**Verse 26. *I will not return with thee*** I cannot acknowledge thee as king, seeing the Lord hath rejected thee.

**Verse 29. *The Strength of Israel will not lie*** What God has purposed he will bring to pass, for he has all power in the heavens and in the earth; and he will not repent-change his purpose-concerning thee.

We may say it was some extenuation of Saul's fault that the people insisted on preserving the best of the prey; for who could resist the demands of a victorious mob? But his crime was in consenting; had he not, the crime would have been theirs alone.

**Verse 32. *Agag came unto him delicately.*** The Septuagint have **τρεμων**, trembling; the original, **מעדנות** maadannoth, delicacies; probably **ישׂא** ish, man, understood; a man of delights, a pleasure-taker: the Vulgate, *pinguissimus et tremens*, "very fat and trembling."

***Surely the bitterness of death is past.*** Almost all the versions render this differently from ours. Surely death is bitter, is their general sense; and this seems to be the true meaning.

**Verse 33. *As thy sword hath made women childless*** It appears that Agag had forfeited his life by his own personal transgressions, and that his death now was the retribution of his cruelties.

***And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces*** 1. What Samuel did here he did in his magisterial capacity; and, 2. It is not likely he did it by his own sword, but by that of an executioner. What kings, magistrates, and generals do, in an official way, by their subjects, servants, or soldiers, they are said to do themselves; *qui facit per alterum, facit per se*.

**Verse 35. *And Samuel came no more to see Saul*** But we read, 1 Samuel 19:22-24, that Saul went to see Samuel at Naioth, but this does not affect what is said here. From this time Samuel had no connection with Saul; he never more acknowledged him as king; he mourned and prayed for him, and continued to perform his prophetic functions at Ramah, and at Naioth, superintending the school of the prophets in that place.



## CHAPTER 16

*Samuel is sent from Ramah to Bethlehem, to anoint David, 1-13. The Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul, and an evil spirit comes upon him, 14. His servants exhort him to get a skillful harper to play before him, 15, 16. He is pleased with the counsel, and desires them to find such a person, 17. They recommend David, 18. He is sent for, comes, plays before Saul, and finds favor in his sight, 19-23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 1. *Fill thine horn with oil*** Horns appear to have been the ancient drinking vessels of all nations; and we may suppose that most persons who had to travel much, always carried one with them, for the purpose of taking up water from the fountains to quench their thirst. Such a horn had Samuel; and on this occasion he was commanded to fill it with oil, for the purpose of consecrating a king over Israel from among the sons of Jesse.

**Verse 2. *Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice*** This was strictly true; Samuel did offer a sacrifice; and it does not appear that he could have done the work which God designed, unless he had offered this sacrifice, and called the elders of the people together, and thus collected Jesse's sons. But he did not tell the principal design of his coming; had he done so, it would have produced evil and no good: and though no man, in any circumstances, should ever tell a lie, yet in all circumstances he is not obliged to tell the whole truth, though in every circumstance he must tell nothing but the truth, and in every case so tell the truth that the hearer shall not believe a lie by it.

**Verse 3. *Call Jesse to the sacrifice*** The common custom was, after the blood of the victim had been poured out to God, and the fat burnt, to feast on the flesh of the sacrifice. This appears to have been the case in all, except in the whole burnt-offering; this was entirely consumed.

**Verse 4. *The elders of the town trembled at his coming*** They knew he was a prophet of the Lord, and they were afraid that he was now come to denounce some judgments of the Most High against their city.

**Verse 5. *Sanctify yourselves*** Change your clothes, and wash your bodies in pure water, and prepare your minds by meditation, reflection, and prayer; that, being in the spirit of sacrifice, ye may offer acceptably to the Lord.

**Verse 7. *Man looketh on the outward appearance*** And it is well he should, and confine his looks to that; for when he pretends to sound the heart, he usurps the prerogative of God.

In what way were these communications made from God to Samuel? It must have been by direct inspirations into his heart. But what a state of holy familiarity does this argue between God and the prophet! I believe Moses himself was not more highly favored than Samuel.

**Verse 10. *Seven of his sons*** This certainly was not done publicly; Samuel, Jesse, and his children, must have been in a private apartment, previously to the public feast on the sacrifice; for Samuel says, 1 Samuel 16:11, We will not sit down till he (David) come.

**Verse 12. *He was ruddy*** I believe the word here means red-haired, he had golden locks. Hair of this kind is ever associated with a delicate skin and florid complexion.

**Verse 13. *The Spirit of the Lord came upon David*** God qualified him to be governor of his people, by infusing such graces as wisdom, prudence, counsel, courage, liberality, and magnanimity.

**Verse 14. *The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul*** He was thrown into such a state of mind by the judgments of God, as to be deprived of any regal qualities which he before possessed. God seems to have taken what gifts he had, and given them to David; and then the evil spirit came upon Saul; for what God fills not, the devil will.

***An evil spirit from the Lord*** The evil spirit was either immediately sent from the Lord, or permitted to come. Whether this was a diabolic possession, or a mere mental malady, the learned are not agreed; it seems to have partaken of both. That Saul had fallen into a deep melancholy,

there is little doubt; that the devil might work more effectually on such a state of mind, there can be but little question. There is an old proverb, Satan delights to fish in troubled waters; and Saul's situation of mind gave him many advantages.

The theory of Dr. Scheuchzer, in his *Physica Sacra*, on the malady of Saul, is allowed to be very ingenious. It is in substance as follows: Health consists in a moderate tension of the fibres, which permits all the fluids to have an entire freedom of circulation, and to the spirits, that of diffusing themselves through all the limbs; on the contrary, disease consists in tensions of the fibres morbidly weak or morbidly strong. This latter seems to have been the case of Saul; and as the undulations of the air which convey sound communicate themselves to and through the most solid bodies, it is easy to suppose that by the modulations of music all the fibres of his body, which were under the influence of the morbidly increased tension, might be so relaxed as to be brought back into their natural state, and thus permit the re-establishment of a free and gentle circulation of the fluids, and consequently of the animal spirits, and thus induce calmness and tranquillity of mind. I believe this theory to be correct, and I should find no difficulty to amplify and to illustrate the subject. Even a skillful playing upon the harp was one means to bring a disordered state of the nervous and fibrous system into a capacity of affording such uninterrupted tranquillity to the mind as to render it capable of receiving the prophetic influence; see the case of Elisha, 2 Kings 3:14, 15. It has been said:—

“Music hath charms to sooth the savage breast.”

This has been literally proved: a musician was brought to play on his instrument while they were feeding a savage lion in the tower of London; the beast immediately left his food, came towards the grating of his den, and began to move in such a way as to show himself affected by the music. The musician ceased, and the lion returned to his food; he recommenced, and the lion left off his prey, and was so affected as to seem by his motions to dance with delight. This was repeatedly tried, and the effects were still the same.

**Verse 18.** *I have seen a son of Jesse* Dr. Warburton supposes the story is anticipated from 1 Samuel 16:14-23, and that the true chronology of this

part of David's life is the following: — 1. David is anointed by Samuel; 2. Carries provisions to his brethren in the army; 3. Fights with and kills Goliath; 4. Is received into the king's court, 5. Contracts a friendship with Jonathan; 6. Incurs Saul's jealousy; 7. Retires to his father's house; 8. Is after some time sent for by Saul to sooth his melancholy with his harp; 9. Again excites Saul's jealousy, who endeavors to smite him with his javelin. This anticipation between the 14th and 23d verse comes in, in the order of time, between verses 9 and 10, 1 Samuel 18:9, 10, where the breach is apparent.

**Verse 20. *Took an ass laden with bread*** He must send a present to Saul to introduce his son, and this was probably the best he had. Dr. Warburton pleads still farther on the propriety of his rectification of the chronology in this place. David had at this time vanquished the Philistine, was become a favourite with the people, had excited Saul's jealousy, and retired to shun its effects. In the interim Saul was seized with the disorder in question, and is recommended by his servants to try the effects of music. They were acquainted with David's skill on the harp, and likewise with Saul's bad disposition towards him; the point was delicate, it required to be managed with address, and therefore they recommend David in this artful manner: "As you must have one constantly in attendance, both in court and on your military expeditions; to be always at hand on occasion, the son of Jesse will become both stations well; he will strengthen your camp and adorn your court, for he is a tried soldier and of a graceful presence. You have nothing to fear from his ambition, for you saw with what prudence he went into voluntary banishment when his popularity had incurred your displeasure." Accordingly Saul is prevailed on, David is sent for, and succeeds with his music; this dissipates all former umbrage, and, as one who is ever to be in attendance, he is made Saul's armor-bearer. This sunshine still continued till his great successes awakened Saul's jealousy afresh, and then the lifted javelin was to strike off all obligations. Thus we see what light is thrown upon the whole history by the supposition of an anticipation in the latter part of this chapter; an anticipation the most natural, proper, and necessary, for the purpose of the historian. Thus reasons Bishop Warburton, and with very considerable plausibility, though the intelligent reader may still have his doubts.

**Verse 23. *The evil spirit from God*** The word evil is not in the common Hebrew text, but it is in the Vulgate, Septuagint, Targum, Syriac, and Arabic, and in eight of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., which present the text thus: רוח אלהים רעה ruach Elohim raah, spiritus Domini malus, the evil spirit of God. The Septuagint leave out θεου, of God, and have πνευμα πονηρον, the evil spirit. The Targum says, The evil spirit from before the Lord; and the Arabic has it. The evil spirit by the permission of God; this is at least the sense.

***And the evil spirit departed from him.*** The Targum says, And the evil spirit descended up from off him. This considers the malady of Saul to be more than a natural disease.

THERE are several difficulties in this chapter; those of the chronology are pretty well cleared, in the opinion of some, by the observations of Bishop Warburton; but there is still something more to be done to make this point entirely satisfactory. Saul's evil spirit, and the influence of music upon it, are not easily accounted for. I have considered his malady to be of a mixed kind, natural and diabolical; there is too much of apparent nature in it to permit us to believe it was all spiritual, and there is too much of apparent supernatural influence to suffer us to believe that it was all natural.

## CHAPTER 17

*The Philistines gather together against Israel at Ephes-dammim, and Saul and his men pitch their camp near the valley of Elah, 1-3. Goliath of Gath, a gigantic man, whose height was six cubits and a span, defies the armies of Israel, and proposes to end all contests by single combat; his armor is described, 4-11. Saul and his host are greatly dismayed, 12. David, having been sent by his father with provisions to his brethren in the army, hears the challenge, inquires into the circumstances, thinks it a reproach to Israel that no man can be found to accept the challenge, is brought before Saul, and proposes to undertake the combat, 13-32. Saul objects to his youth and inexperience, 33. David shows the grounds on which he undertakes it, 34-37. Saul arms him with his own armor: but David, finding them an encumbrance, puts them off, and takes his staff, his sling, and five stones out of the brook, and goes to meet Goliath, 38-40. The Philistine draws near, despises, defies, and curses him, 41-44. David retorts his defiance, 45-47. They draw near to each other, and David slings a stone, hits Goliath in the forehead, slays him, and cuts off his head with his own sword, 48-51. The Philistines flee, and are pursued by the Israelites, 52, 53. David brings the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem, 54. Conversation between Saul and Abner concerning David, who is in consequence brought before Saul, 55-58.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 1.** *Now the Philistines gathered together* Calmet thinks that this war happened eight years after the anointing of David, and ten or twelve years after the war with the Amalekites. We have already seen that there was war between Saul and the Philistines all his days. See 1 Samuel 14:52.

**Shochoh and Azekah** Places which lay to the south of Jerusalem and to the west of Bethlehem; about five leagues from the former. Ephes-dammim was somewhere in the vicinity, but it is not known where. See Calmet.

**Verse 2. *The valley of Elah*** Some translate this the turpentine valley, or the valley of the terebinth trees; and others, the valley of oaks. The situation of this valley is well known.

**Verse 3. *The Philistines stood on a mountain*** These were two eminences or hills, from which they could see and talk with each other.

**Verse 4. *There went out a champion*** Our word champion comes from campus, the field; Campio est enim ille qui pugnat in campo, hoc est, in castris, “Champion is he, properly, who fights in the field; i.e., in camps.” A man well skilled in arms, strong, brave, and patriotic.

But is this the meaning of the original **אִישׁ הַבְּנַיִם** ish habbenayim, a middle man, the man between two; that is, as here, the man who undertakes to settle the disputes between two armies or nations. So our ancient champions settled disputes between contending parties by what was termed camp fight, hence the campio or champion. The versions know not well what to make of this man. The Vulgate calls him sir spurius, “a bastard;” the Septuagint, **ανηρ δυνατος**, “a strong or powerful man;” the Targum, **גַּבְרָא מִבֵּינֵיהֶם** gabra mibbeyneyhon, “a man from between them;” the Arabic, (Arabic) rujil jibar, “a great or gigantic man;” the Syriac is the same; and Josephus terms him **ανηρ παμμεγεθιστατος**, “an immensely great man.” The Vulgate has given him the notation of spurius or bastard, because it considered the original as expressing a son of two, i.e., a man whose parents are unknown. Among all these I consider our word champion, as explained above, the best and most appropriate to the original terms.

***Whose height was six cubits and a span.*** The word cubit signifies the length from cubitus, the elbow, to the top of the middle finger, which is generally rated at one foot six inches. The span is the distance from the top of the middle finger to the end of the thumb, when extended as far as they can stretch on a plain; this is ordinarily nine inches. Were we sure that these were the measures, and their extent, which are intended in the original words, we could easily ascertain the height of this Philistine; it would then be nine feet nine inches, which is a tremendous height for a man.

But the versions are not all agreed in his height. The Septuagint read **τεσσαρων πηχεων και σπιθαμης**, four cubits and a span; and Josephus

reads the same. It is necessary however to observe that the Septuagint, in the Codex Alexandrinus, read with the Hebrew text. But what was the length of the ancient cubit? This has been variously computed; eighteen inches, twenty inches and a half, and twenty-one inches. If we take the first measurement, he was nine feet nine; if the second, and read palm instead of span, with the Vulgate and others, he was ten feet seven inches and a half; if we take the last, which is the estimate of Graevius, with the span, he was eleven feet three inches; or if we go to the exactest measurement, as laid down in Bishop Cumberland's tables, where he computes the cubit at 21.888 inches, the span at 10.944 inches, and the palm at 3.684 inches, then the six cubits and the span will make exactly 11 feet 10.272 inches. If we take the palm instead of the span, then the height will be 11 feet 3.012 inches. But I still think that the nine feet nine inches is the most reasonable.

**Verse 5. *He was armed with a coat of mail*** The words in the original, שֵׁרוֹ קַשְׁשִׁים shiryon kaskassim, mean a coat of mail formed of plates of brass overlapping each other, like the scales of a fish, or tiles of a house. This is the true notion of the original terms.

With thin plates of brass or iron, overlapping each other, were the ancient coats of mail formed in different countries; many formed in this way may be now seen in the tower of London.

***The weight-five thousand shekels*** Following Bishop Cumberland's tables, and rating the shekel at two hundred and nineteen grains, and the Roman ounce at four hundred and thirty-eight grains, we find that Goliath's coat of mail, weighing five thousand shekels, was exactly one hundred and fifty-six pounds four ounces avoirdupois. A vast weight for a coat of mail, but not all out of proportion to the man.

**Verse 6. *Greaves of brass upon his legs*** This species of armor may be seen on many ancient monuments. It was a plate of brass (though perhaps sometimes formed of laminae or plates, like the mail) which covered the shin or fore part of the leg, from the knee down to the instep, and was buckled with straps behind the leg. From ancient monuments we find that it was commonly worn only on one leg. VEGETIUS, de Revelatione Militari, says, Pedites Scutati etiam ferreas ocreas in dextris cruribus copebantur accipere. "The foot soldiers, called Scutati, from their particular species of



shield, were obliged to use iron greaves on their right legs.” One of these may be seen in the monument of the gladiator Buto, in Montfaucon; and another in the Mosaic pavement at Bognor, in Surrey.

***A target of brass between his shoulders.*** When not actually engaged, soldiers threw their shields behind their back, so that they appeared to rest or hang between the shoulders.

There are different opinions concerning this piece of armor, called here **כִּידוֹן** kidon. Some think it was a covering for the shoulders; others, that it was a javelin or dart; others, that it was a lance; some, a club; and others, a sword. It is certainly distinguished from the shield, 1 Samuel 17:41, and is translated a spear, Joshua 8:18.

***Verse 7. The staff on his spear was like a weaver's beam*** Either like that on which the warp is rolled, or that on which the cloth is rolled. We know not how thick this was, because there were several sorts of looms, and the sizes of the beams very dissimilar. Our woollen, linen, cotton, and silk looms are all different in the size of their beams; and I have seen several that I should not suppose too thick, though they might be too short, for Goliath's spear.

***His spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron*** That is, his spear's head was of iron, and it weighed six hundred shekels; this, according to the former computation, would amount to eighteen pounds twelve ounces.

***And one bearing a shield הצננה*** hatstsinnah, from **שרעבמצ** tsan, pointed or penetrating, if it do not mean some kind of a lance, must mean a shield, with what is called the umbo, a sharp protuberance, in the middle, with which they could as effectually annoy their enemies as defend themselves. Many of the old Highland targets were made with a projecting dagger in the center. Taking the proportions of things unknown to those known, the armor of Goliath is supposed to have weighed not less than two hundred and seventy-two pounds thirteen ounces! Plutarch informs us that the ordinary weight of a soldier's panoply, or complete armor, was one talent, or sixty pounds; and that one Alcimus, in the army of Demetrius, was considered as a prodigy, because his panoply weighed two talents, or one hundred and twenty pounds.

**Verse 8. *I a Philistine*** The Targum adds much to this speech. This is the substance: “I am Goliath the Philistine of Gath, who killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests; and led into captivity the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and placed it in the temple of Dagon my god; and it remained in the cities of the Philistines seven months. Also, in all our battles I have gone at the head of the army, and we conquered and cut down men, and laid them as low as the dust of the earth; and to this day the Philistines have not granted me the honor of being chief of a thousand men. And ye, men of Israel, what noble exploit has Saul, the son of Kish, of Gibeah, done, that ye should have made him king over you? If he be a hero, let him come down himself and fight with me; but if he be a weak or cowardly man, then choose you out a man that he may come down to me.”

**Verse 9. *Then will we be your servants*** Of this stipulation we hear nothing farther.

**Verse 10. *I defy*** אֲנִי חִרְפֹּתִי ani cheraphti, “I strip and make bare,” the armies of Israel; for none dared to fight him. From the Dhunoor Veda Shastra it appears that, among the Hindoos, it was common, before the commencement of an engagement, to challenge the enemy by throwing out some terms of abuse, similar to those used by Goliath. We find this also in Homer: his heroes scold each other heartily before they begin to fight. See on 1 Samuel 17:43.

**Verse 11. *Saul and all Israel-were dismayed*** They saw no man able to accept the challenge.

**Verse 12.** The 12th verse, to the 31st inclusive, are wanting in the Septuagint; as also the 41st verse; and from the 54th to the end; with the first five verses of 1 Samuel 18, and the 9th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 18th, and 19th of the same.

All these parts are found in the Codex Alexandrinus; but it appears that the MS. from which the Codex Alexandrinus was copied, had them not. See observations at the end of this chapter. Dr. Kennicott has rendered it very probable that these portions are not a genuine part of the text.

Notwithstanding what Bishop Warburton and others have done to clear the chronology of the present printed Hebrew, it is impossible to make a clear consistent sense of the history, unless these verses are omitted. Let

any one read the eleventh verse in connection with the thirty-second, leave out the forty-first, and connect the fifty-fourth with the sixth of 1 Samuel 18, and he will be perfectly convinced that there is nothing wanting to make the sense complete; to say nothing of the other omissions noted above. If the above be taken in as genuine, the ingenuity of man has hitherto failed to free the whole from apparent contradiction and absurdity. I must confess that where every one else has failed, I have no hope of succeeding: I must, therefore, leave all farther attempts to justify the chronology; and refer to those who have written for and against the genuineness of this part of the common Hebrew text. At the end of the chapter I shall introduce some extracts from Kennicott and Pilkington: and leave the whole with the unprejudiced and discerning reader.

**Verse 18. *Carry these ten cheeses*** Cheeses of milk, says the margin. In the East they do not make what we call cheese: they press the milk but slightly, and carry it in rush baskets. It is highly salted, and little different from curds.

**Verse 19. *Fighting with the Philistines***. See at the end of the chapter. {1 Samuel 17:58}

**Verse 29. *Is there not a cause?*** הלוא דבר הוא halo dabar hu. I believe the meaning is what several of the versions express: I have spoken but a word. And should a man be made an offender for a word?

**Verse 32. *And David said*** This properly connects with the eleventh verse. {1 Samuel 17:11}

**Verse 33. *Thou art but a youth*** Supposed to be about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age.

**Verse 34. *Thy servant kept his father's sheep*** He found it necessary to give Saul the reasons why he undertook this combat; and why he expected to be victorious. 1. I have courage to undertake it, and strength to perform it. 2. Both have been tried in a very signal manner: (1.) A lion came upon my flock, and seized a lamb; I ran after him, he attacked me, I seized hold of him by his shaggy locks, smote and slew him, and delivered the lamb. (2.) A bear came in the same way, and I attacked and slew him. 3. This, with whom I am to fight, is a Philistine, an uncircumcised man; one who is an enemy to God: God therefore will not be on his side. On that ground I

have nothing to fear. 4. He has defied the armies of the Lord; and has in effect defied Jehovah himself: therefore the battle is the Lord's, and he will stand by me. 5. I have perfect confidence in his protection and defense; for they that trust in him shall never be confounded. 6. I conclude, therefore, that the Lord, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine.

**Verse 35.** The slaying of the lion and the bear mentioned here, must have taken place at two different times; perhaps the verse should be read thus: I went out after him, (the lion.) and smote him, etc. And when he (the bear) rose up against me, I caught him by the beard and slew him.

**Verse 37. *Go, and the Lord be with thee.*** Saul saw that these were reasonable grounds of confidence, and therefore wished him success.

**Verse 38. *Saul armed David*** He knew that although the battle was the Lord's, yet prudent means should be used to secure success.

**Verse 39. *I cannot go with these*** In ancient times it required considerable exercise and training to make a man expert in the use of such heavy armor; armor which in the present day scarcely a man is to be found who is able to carry; and so it must have been then, until that practice which arises from frequent use had made the proprietor perfect. I have not proved them says David: I am wholly unaccustomed to such armor and it would be an encumbrance to me.

**Verse 40. *He took his staff*** What we would call his crook.

***Five smooth stones*** 1. Had they been rough or angular, they would not have passed easily through the air, and their asperities would, in the course of their passage, have given them a false direction. 2. Had they not been smooth, they could not have been readily despatched from the sling.

***A shepherd's bag*** That in which he generally carried his provisions while keeping the sheep in the open country.

***And his sling*** The sling, both among the Greeks and Hebrews, has been a powerful offensive weapon. See what has been said on Judges 20:16. It is composed of two strings and a leathern strap; the strap is in the middle, and is the place where the stone or bullet lies. The string on the right end of the strap is firmly fastened to the hand; that on the left is held between

the thumb and middle joint of the fore finger. It is then whirled two or three times round the head; and when discharged, the finger and thumb let go their hold of the left end string. The velocity and force of the sling are in proportion to the distance of the strap, where the bullet lies, from the shoulder joint. Hence the ancient Balears, or inhabitants of Majorca and Minorca, are said to have had three slings of different lengths, the longest they used when the enemy was at the greatest distance; the middle one, on their nearer approach; and the shortest, when they came into the ordinary fighting distance in the field. The shortest is the most certain, though not the most powerful. The Balearians are said to have had one of their slings constantly bound about their head, to have used the second as a girdle, and to have carried the third always in their hand. See DIOD. Sic. lib. v., c. 18, p. 286, edit. Bipont.

In the use of the sling it requires much practice to hit the mark; but when once this dexterity is acquired, the sling is nearly as fatal as the musket or bow; see on 1 Samuel 17:49. David was evidently an expert marksman; and his sling gave him greatly the advantage over Goliath; an advantage of which the giant does not seem to have been aware. He could hit him within any speaking distance, if he missed once, he had as many chances as he had stones; and after all, being unencumbered with armor, young, and athletic, he could have saved his life by flight. Against him the Philistine could do but little, except in close fight; it is true he appears to have had a javelin or missile spear, (see on 1 Samuel 17:6,) but David took care to prevent the use of all such weapons, by giving him the first blow.

**Verse 41. *The man that bare the shield*** See on 1 Samuel 17:7.

**Verse 42. *He disdained him*** He held him in contempt; he saw that he was young, and from his ruddy complexion supposed him to be effeminate.

**Verse 43. *Amos I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?*** It is very likely that Goliath did not perceive the sling, which David might have kept coiled up within his hand.

***Cursed David by his gods.*** Prayed his gods to curse him. This long parley between David and Goliath is quite in the style of those times. A Hindoo sometimes in a fit of anger says to his enemy, The goddess Kalee shall

devour thee! May Doorga destroy thee! Homer's heroes have generally an altercation before they engage; and sometimes enter into geographical and genealogical discussions, and vaunt and scold most contemptibly.

**Verse 44. *Come to me, and I will give thy flesh*** He intended, as soon as he could lay hold on him, to pull him to pieces.

**Verse 45. *Thou comest to me with a sword*** I come to thee with the name (בשם beshem) of Jehovah of hosts; the God of the armies of Israel. What Goliath expected from his arms, David expected from the ineffable name.

**Verse 46. *This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand*** This was a direct and circumstantial prophecy of what did take place.

**Verse 47. *For the battle is the Lord's*** It is the Lord's war: you are fighting against him and his religion, as the champion of your party; I am fighting for God, as the champion of his cause.

**Verse 48. *The Philistine arose*** This was an end of the parley; the Philistine came forward to meet David, and David on his part ran forward to meet the Philistine.

**Verse 49. *Smote the Philistine in his forehead*** Except his face, Goliath was everywhere covered over with strong armor. Either he had no beaver to his helmet, or it was lifted up so as to expose his forehead; but it does not appear that the ancient helmets had any covering for the face. The Septuagint however supposes that the stone passed through the helmet, and sank into his forehead: **και διεδυ ο λιθος δια της περικεφαλαιας εις το μετωπον αυτου**, "and the stone passed through his helmet, and sank into his skull." To some this has appeared perfectly improbable; but we are assured by ancient writers that scarcely any thing could resist the force of the sling.

Diodorus Siculus, lib. v., c. 18, p. 287, edit. Bipont, says "The Baleares, in time of war, sling greater stones than any other people, and with such force, that they seem as if projected from a catapult. **διο και κατα τας τειχομαχιας εν ταις προσβολαις τυπτοντες τους προ των επαλξεων εφεστωτας κατατραυματιζουσιν· εν δε ταις παραταξεσι τους τε θυρεους, και τα κρηνη, και παν σκεπαστηριον οπλον**

Therefore, in assaults made on fortified towns, they grievously wound the besieged; and in battle they break in pieces the shields, helmets, and every species of armor by which the body is defended. And they are such exact marksmen that they scarcely ever miss that at which they aim.”

The historian accounts for their great accuracy and power in the use of the sling, from this circumstance: *αιτιαι δε τουτων, κ. τ. λ.* “They attain to this perfection by frequent exercise from their childhood; for while they are young and under their mother’s care, they are obliged to learn to sling; for they fasten bread for a mark at the top of the pole; and till the child hit

and I must refer the reader to what immediately follows on the authenticity of the verses which concern this subject.

ON the subject of that large omission in the Septuagint of which I have spoken on 1 Samuel 17:12, I here subjoin the reasons of Mr. Pilkington and Dr. Kennicott for supposing it to be an interpolation of some rabbinical writer, added at a very early period to the Hebrew text.

“Had every version of the Hebrew text,” says Mr. Pilkington, “agreed to give a translation of this passage, as we now find, the attempts of clearing it from its embarrassments would have been attended with very great difficulties; but, as in several other cases before mentioned, so here, the providence of God seems to have so far secured the credit of those who were appointed to be the penmen of the oracles of truth, that the defense of their original records may be undertaken upon good grounds, and supported by sufficient evidence. For we are now happily in possession of an ancient version of these two chapters, which appears to have been made from a Hebrew copy, which had none of the thirty-nine verses which are here supposed to have been interpolated, nor was similar to what we have at present in those places which are here supposed to have been altered. This version is found in the Vatican copy of the Seventy, which whoever reads and considers, will find the accounts there given regular, consistent, and probable. It will be proper, therefore, to examine the several parts where such alterations are supposed to have been made in the Hebrew text, in order to produce such other external or internal evidence, as shall be necessary to support the charge of interpolation, which ought not to be laid merely upon the authority of any single version.

“The first passage, which is not translated in the Vatican copy of the Greek version, is from the 11th to the 32d verse of the 17th chapter wherein we have an account: 1. Of David’s being sent to the camp to visit his brethren. 2. Of his conversation with the men of Israel, relating to Goliath’s challenge; and their informing him of the premium Saul had offered to any one that should accept it, and come off victorious. 3. Of Eliab’s remarkable behavior to his brother David, upon his making this inquiry. And, 4. Of Saul’s being made acquainted with what David had said upon this occasion.

“It is obvious to remark upon this passage:—



“1. That, after David had been of so much service to the king, in causing the evil spirit to depart from him; after its being recorded how greatly Saul loved him, and that he had made him his armor-bearer; after the king had sent to Jesse to signify his intention of keeping his son with him; all of which are particularly mentioned in the latter part of the preceding chapter; the account of his keeping his father’s sheep afterwards, and being sent to his brethren upon this occasion, must appear to be somewhat improbable. 2. That what is here said of the premium that Saul had offered to him who should conquer the Philistine, is not well consistent with the accounts afterwards given, of which we shall have occasion to take particular notice. 3. That Eliab’s behavior, as here represented, is not only remarkable but unaccountable and absurd. And, 4. That the inquiries of a young man, who is not said to have declared any intentions of accepting the challenge of the Philistine, would scarcely have been related to the king. But now, if this passage be supposed to have been interpolated, we must see how the connection stands upon its being omitted.

**“Verse 11.** ‘When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.’

**“Verse 32.** ‘Then David said unto Saul, Let no man’s heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.’

“No connection can be more proper, and in this view David is represented as being at that time an attendant upon the king; and when we had been told just before, (1 Samuel 16:21,) that Saul had made him his armor-bearer, we might justly expect to find him with him when the battle was set in array; 1 Samuel 17:2. In this connection David is also represented as fully answering the character before given of him: ‘A mighty valiant man, and a man of war,’ 1 Samuel 16:18, and ready to fight with the giant upon the first proposal, (for the account of the Philistine presenting himself forty days is in this passage here supposed to have been interpolated, 1 Samuel 17:16.) I shall leave it to the critical Hebrew reader to make what particular remarks he may think proper in respect to the style and manner of expression in these twenty verses, and let Jesse go for an old man amongst men in the days of Saul, etc.” -PILKINGTON’S Remarks upon several Passages of Scripture, p. 62.

“The authorities,” says Dr. Kennicott, “here brought to prove this great interpolation are the internal evidence arising from the context, and the external arising from the Vatican copy of the Greek version. But how then reads the Alexandrian MS.? The remarks acknowledge that this MS. agrees here with the corrupted Hebrew; and therefore was probably translated, in this part, from some late Hebrew copy which had thus been interpolated; see pages 72, 75. Now that these two MSS. do contain different readings in some places, I observed in pages 398-404, and 414. And in this 17th chapter of Samuel, 1 Samuel 17:4, the Alexandrian MS. says, agreeably to the present Hebrew, that the height of Goliath was six cubits and a span, i.e., above eleven feet; but the Vatican MS., agreeably to Josephus, that it was four cubits and a span, i.e., near eight feet. And in 1 Samuel 17:43, what the Vatican renders he cursed David by his gods, the Alexandrian renders by his idols. But though the Hebrew text might be consulted and a few words differently rendered by the transcriber of one of these MSS., or by the transcribers of the MSS. from which these MSS. were taken; yet, as these MSS. do contain, in this chapter, such Greek as is almost universally the same, (in verb, noun, and particle,) I presume that they contain here the same translation with the designed alteration of a few words, and with the difference of the interpolated verses found in the Alexandrian MS.

“But, after all, what if the Alexandrian MS., which now has these verses should itself prove them interpolated? What if the very words of this very MS. demonstrate that these verses were not in some former Greek MS.? Certainly if the Alexandrian MS. should be thus found, at last, not to contradict, but to confirm the Vatican in its omission of these twenty verses, the concurrence of these authorities will render the argument much more forcible and convincing.

“Let us then state the present question; which is, Whether the twenty verses between ver. 11 and 32, which are now in the Hebrew text, are interpolated? The Vatican MS. goes on immediately from the end of the 11th verse (**καὶ εφοβηθησαν σφοδρα**) to ver. 32, which begins **καὶ εἶπε δαυιδ**: whereas the 12th verse in the Hebrew begins, not with a speech, but with David’s birth and parentage. If then the Alexandrian MS. begins its present 12th verse as the 32d verse begins, and as the 12th verse could not begin properly, I appeal to any man of judgment whether the transcriber was not certainly copying from a ME. in which the 32d verse

succeeded the 11th verse; and if so, then from a MS. which had not these intermediate verses? Now that this is the fact, the case will at once appear upon examining the Alexandrian copy, where the 12th verse begins with **και ειπε δαυιδ**; as the 32d verse begins, and as the 12th verse could not begin properly.

“The case seems clearly to be, that the transcriber, having wrote what is now in the 11th verse, was beginning what is now the 32d verse; when, after writing **και ειπε δαυιδ**, he perceived that either the Hebrew, or some other Greek copy, or the margin of his own copy, had several intermediate verses: upon which, without blotting out the significant word **ειπε**, he goes on to write the addition: thus fortunately leaving a decisive proof of his own great interpolation. if this addition was in the margin of that MS. from which the Alexandrian was transcribed, it might be inserted by that transcriber; but if it was inserted either from the Hebrew, or from any other Greek copy, the transcriber of this MS. seems to have had too little learning for such a proceeding. If it was done by the writer of that former MS., then the interpolation may be a hundred or a hundred and fifty years older than the Alexandrian MS. Perhaps the earliest Christian writer who enlarges upon the strong circumstance of David’s coming from the sheep to the army, is Chrysostom, in his homily upon David and Saul; so that it had then been long in some copies of the Greek version. The truth seems to be, that the addition of these twenty verses took its first rise from what Josephus had inserted in his variation and embellishment of this history; but that many circumstances were afterwards added to his additions.

“For (and it is extremely remarkable) though Josephus has some, he has not half the improbabilities which are found at present in the sacred history: as for instance: Nothing of the armies being fighting in the valley, or fighting at all, when David was sent by his father, as in 1 Samuel 17:19. Nothing of the host going forth, and shouting for the battle, at the time of David’s arrival, as in 1 Samuel 17:20. Nothing of all the men of Israel fleeing from Goliath, as in 1 Samuel 17:24; on the contrary, the two armies, (it should seem,) continued upon their two mountains. Nothing of David’s long conversation with the soldiers, 1 Samuel 17:25-27, in seasons so very improper, as, whilst they were shouting for the battle, or whilst they were fleeing from Goliath; and fleeing from a man after they had seen him and

heard him twice in every day for forty days together, 1 Samuel 17:16, the two armies, all this long while, leaning upon their arms, and looking very peaceably at one another. Nothing of Goliath's repeating his challenge every morning and every evening, as in 1 Samuel 17:16. David, (it is said, 1 Samuel 17:23,) happened to hear one of these challenges; but if he heard the evening challenge, it would have been then too late for the several transactions before, and the long pursuit after, Goliath's death; and David could not well hear the morning challenge, because he could scarce have arrived so early, after travelling from Beth-lehem to the army, (about fifteen miles,) and bringing with him an ephah of parched corn, and ten loaves, and ten cheeses, as in 1 Samuel 17:17, 18. Nothing of encouraging any man to fight Goliath, by an offer of the king's daughter, 1 Samuel 17:25; which, as it seems from the subsequent history, had never been thought of; and which, had it been offered, would probably have been accepted by some man or other out of the whole army. Nothing of Eliab's reprimanding David for coming to see the battle, as in 1 Samuel 17:28; but for a very different reason; and, indeed, it is highly improbable that Eliab should treat him at all with contempt and scurrility, after having seen Samuel anoint him for the future king of Israel, see 1 Samuel 16:1-13. Nothing of a second conversation between David and the soldiers, as in 1 Samuel 17:30, 31. Nothing of Saul and Abner's not knowing who was David's father, at the time of his going forth against the Philistine, as in 1 Samuel 17:55. Nothing of David's being introduced to the king by Abner, in form, after killing the Philistine, 1 Samuel 17:57, at a time when the king and the captain of the host had no leisure for complemental ceremony; but were set out, 1 Samuel 17:57, in immediate and full pursuit of the Philistines. Nor, lastly, is any notice taken here by Josephus of what now begins the 18th chapter, Jonathan's friendship for David, which is related elsewhere, and in a different manner; on the contrary, as soon as Josephus has mentioned Goliath's death, and told us that Saul and all Israel shouted, and fell at once upon the Philistines, and that, when the pursuit was ended, the head of Goliath was carried by David into his own tent, (and he could have then no tent of his own if he had not been then an officer in the army:) I say, as soon as Josephus has recorded these circumstances, he goes on to Saul's envy and hatred of David, arising from the women's songs of congratulation; exactly as these capital parts of the history are connected in the VATICAN MS. And with this circumstance I shall conclude

these remarks; earnestly recommending the whole to the learned reader's attentive examination.

“It must not however be forgot, that the learned F. Houbigant has, in his Bible, placed these twenty verses (from the 11th to the 32d) between hooks, as containing a passage which comes in very improperly.

“If it be inquired as to this interpolation in Samuel, when it could possibly

and fanciful embellishment of the rabbin reminds one of the motley absurdity described by the poet in the famous lines:—

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam  
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plasmas, etc.

“The passage supposed to be interpolated here, was in the Hebrew text before the time of Aquila; because there are preserved a few of the differences in those translations of it which were made by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. These verses, being thus acknowledged at that time, would doubtless be found in such copies as the Jews then declared to be genuine, and which they delivered afterwards to Origen as such. And that Origen did refer to the Jews for such copies as they held genuine, he allows in his epistle to Africanus; for there he speaks of soothing the Jews, in order to get pure copies from them.” -KENNICOTT’S Second Dissertation on the Hebrew Text, p. 419.

In the general dissertation which Dr. Kennicott has prefixed to his edition of the Hebrew Bible, he gives additional evidence that the verses in question were not found originally in the Septuagint, and consequently not in the Hebrew copy used for that version. Several MSS. in the royal library at Paris either omit these verses or have them with asterisks or notes of dubiousness. And the collation by Dr. Holmes and his continuators has brought farther proof of the fact. From the whole, there is considerable evidence that these verses were not in the Septuagint in the time of Origen; and if they were not in the MSS. used by Origen, it is very probable they were not in that version at first; and if they were not in the Septuagint at first, it is very probable that they were not in the Hebrew text one hundred and fifty years before Christ; and if not then in the Hebrew text, it is very probable they were not in that text originally. See Dissertation on Gen., p. 9; and Remarks on Select Passages, p. 104.

I have only to remark here, that the historical books of the Old Testament have suffered more by the carelessness or infidelity of transcribers than any other parts of the sacred volume; and of this the two books of Samuel, the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles, give the most decided and unequivocal proofs. Of this also the reader has already had considerable evidence; and he will find this greatly increased as he proceeds.

It seems to me that the Jewish copyists had not the same opinion of the Divine inspiration of those books as they had of those of the law and the prophets; and have therefore made no scruple to insert some of their own traditions, or the glosses of their doctors, in different parts; for as the whole must evidently appear to them as a compilation from their public records, they thought it no harm to make different alterations and additions from popular statements of the same facts, which they found in general circulation. This is notoriously the case in Josephus; this will account, and it does to me very satisfactorily, for many of the various readings now found in the Hebrew text of the historical books. They were held in less reverence, and they were copied with less care, and emended with less critical skill, than the pentateuch and the prophets; and on them the hands of careless, ignorant, and temerarious scribes, have too frequently been laid. To deny this, only betrays a portion of the same ignorance which was the parent of those disorders; and attempts to blink the question, though they may with some be an argument of zeal, yet with all the sincere and truly enlightened friends of Divine revelation, will be considered to be as dangerous as they are absurd.

Where the rash or ignorant hand of man has fixed a blot on the Divine records, let them who in the providence of God are qualified for the task wipe it off; and while they have the thanks of all honest men, God will have the glory.

There have been many who have affected to deny the existence of giants. There is no doubt that the accounts given of several are either fabulous or greatly exaggerated. But men of an extraordinary size are not uncommon even in our own day: I knew two brothers of the name of Knight, who were born in the same township with myself, who were seven feet six inches high; and another, in the same place, Charles Burns who was eight feet six! These men were well and proportionately made. I have known others of this height, whose limbs were out of all proportion; their knees bent in, and joints rickety.

Ireland, properly speaking, is the only nation on the earth that produces GIANTS; and let me tell the poor, that this is the only nation in the world that may be said to live on potatoes; with little bread, and less flesh-meat.

I have seen and entertained in my house the famous Polish dwarf, the Count Boruwlaski, who was about thirty-six inches high, every part of whose person was formed with the most perfect and delicate symmetry. The prodigious height and bulk of Charles Burns, and the astonishing diminutiveness of Count Boruwlaski, could not be properly estimated but by comparing both together. Each was a perfect man; and yet, in quantum, how disproportionate! Man is the only creature in whom the extremes of minuteness and magnitude are so apparent, and yet the proportion of the parts in each strictly correlative.



## CHAPTER 18

*Jonathan and David commence a lasting friendship; and David acts prudently with respect to Saul, 1-5 Saul becomes jealous of David, on account of the esteem in which he is held in Israel; and, in his fury endeavors to destroy him, 6-12. David is made captain over a thousand; and the people love and respect him, 13-16. Saul, in order to ensnare him, offers him his daughter in marriage, 17-24; and requires a hundred foreskins of the Philistines for dowry; hoping that, in endeavoring to procure them, David might fall by the hands of the Philistines, 25. David agrees to the conditions, fulfils them, and has Michal to wife, 26-30.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1.** *When he had made an end of speaking* These first five verses are omitted by the Septuagint. See the notes on the preceding chapter.

*Jonathan loved him as his own soul* The most intimate friendship subsisted between them; and they loved each other with pure hearts fervently. No love was lost between them; each was worthy of the other. They had a friendship which could not be affected with changes or chances, and which exemplified all that the ancients have said on the subject; *την φιλιαν ισοτητα ειναι, και μιαν ψυχην, τον φιλον ετερον αυτον*; “Friendship produces an entire sameness; it is one soul in two bodies: a friend is another self.”

**Verse 4.** *Jonathan stripped himself* Presents of clothes or rich robes, in token of respect and friendship, are frequent in the East. And how frequently arms and clothing were presented by warriors to each other in token of friendship, may be seen in Homer and other ancient writers.

**Verse 5.** *Set him over the men of war* Made him generalissimo; or what we would call field marshal.

**Verse 6. *When David was returned*** This verse connects well with the 54th verse of the preceding chapter; {1 Samuel 17:54} and carries on the narration without any break or interruption. See the notes there.

***The women came out*** It was the principal business of certain women to celebrate victories, sing at funerals, etc.

***With instruments of music.*** The original word (שלשים shalishim) signifies instruments with three strings; and is, I think, properly translated by the Vulgate, cum sistris, “with sistrums.” This instrument is well known as being used among the ancient Egyptians: it was made of brass, and had three, sometimes more, brass rods across; which, being loose in their holes, made a jingling noise when the instrument was shaken.

**Verse 7. *Saul hath slain his thousands*** As it cannot literally be true that Saul had slain thousands, and David ten thousands; it would be well to translate the passage thus: Saul hath smitten or fought against thousands; David against tens of thousands. “Though Saul has been victorious in all his battles; yet he has not had such great odds against him as David has had; Saul, indeed, has been opposed by thousands; David, by ten thousands.” We may here remark that the Philistines had drawn out their whole forces at this time: and when Goliath was slain, they were totally discomfited by the Israelites, led on chiefly by David.

**Verse 10. *The evil spirit from God*** See on 1 Samuel 16:14, etc.

***He prophesied in the midst of the house*** He was beside himself; made prayers, supplications, and incoherent imprecations: “God preserve my life,” “Destroy my enemies,” or such like prayers, might frequently escape from him in his agitated state. The Arabic intimates that he was actually possessed by an evil spirit, and that through it he uttered a sort of demoniacal predictions.

But let us examine the original more closely: it is said that Saul prophesied in the midst of his house, that is, he prayed in his family, while David was playing on the harp; and then suddenly threw his javelin, intending to have killed David. Let it be observed that the word ויתנבא vaiythnabbe is the third person singular of the future hithpael; the sign of which is not only to do an action on or for one’s self, but also to feign or pretend to do it. The

meaning seems to be, SAUL pretended to be praying in his family, the better to conceal his murderous intentions, and render David unsuspecting; who was, probably, at this time performing the musical part of the family worship. This view of the subject makes the whole case natural and plain.

**Verse 11. *Saul cast the javelin*** The javelin or spear was the emblem of regal authority; kings always had it at hand, and in ancient monuments they are always represented with it.

In ancient times, says Justin, kings used a spear instead of a diadem: *Per ea tempora reges hastas pro diademate habebant*, Hist. lib. xliii. And as spears were the emblems of supreme power, hence they were reputed as attributes of the Divinity, and were worshipped as representatives of the gods. *Ab origine verum, pro DIIS immortalibus veteres HASTAS coluerunt, ob cujus religionis memoriam, adhuc deorum simulachris HASTAE adduntur.* — Ibid.

**Verse 13. *Made him his captain*** This was under pretense of doing him honor, when it was in effect only to rid himself of the object of his envy.

**Verse 15. *He was afraid of him.*** He saw that, by his prudent conduct, he was every day gaining increasing influence.

**Verse 17. *Fight the Lord's battles.*** Mr. Calmet properly remarks that the wars of the Hebrews, while conducted by the express orders of God, were truly the wars of the Lord; but when the spirit of worldly ambition and domination became mingled with them, they were no longer the wars of the Lord, but wars of lust and profanity.

**Verse 21. *That she may be a snare to him*** Saul had already determined the condition on which he would give his daughter to David; viz., that he should slay one hundred Philistines: this he supposed he would undertake for the love of Michal, and that he must necessarily perish in the attempt; and thus Michal would become a snare to him.

**Verse 25. *But a hundred foreskins*** That is, Thou shalt slay one hundred Philistines, and thou shalt produce their foreskins, as a proof, not only that thou hast killed one hundred men, but that these are of the uncircumcised. A custom similar to this still prevails among the Abyssinians, according to Bruce. See his Travels.

**Verse 27. *Slew-two hundred men.*** The Septuagint has only one hundred men. Saul covenanted with David for a hundred; and David himself says, 2 Samuel 3:14, that he espoused Michal for a hundred: hence it is likely that one hundred is the true reading.

**Verse 30. *Then the princes of the Philistines went forth*** Probably to avenge themselves on David and the Israelites: but of this war we know no more than that David was more skillful and successful in it than any of the other officers of Saul. His military skill was greater, and his success was proportionate to his skill and courage; hence it is said, he behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul.

## CHAPTER 19

*Jonathan pleads for David before Saul, who is for the present reconciled, 1-7. David defeats the Philistines; and Saul becomes again envious, and endeavors to slay him, but he escapes, 8-10. Saul sends men to David's house, to lie in wait for him; but Michal saves him by a stratagem, 11-17. David flees to Samuel, at Ramah, 18. Saul, hearing of it, sends messengers three several times to take him; but the Spirit of coming upon them, they prophesy, 19-21. Saul, hearing of this, goes after David himself, and falls under the same influence, 22-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 1.** *That they should kill David.* Nothing less than the especial interposition of God could have saved David's life, when every officer about the king's person, and every soldier, had got positive orders to despatch him.

**Verse 2.** *Take heed to thyself until the morning* Perhaps the order was given to slay him the next day; and therefore Jonathan charges him to be particularly on his guard at that time, and to hide himself.

**Verse 4.** *Jonathan spake good of David* It is evident that Jonathan was satisfied that David was an innocent man; and that his father was most unjustly incensed against him.

**Verse 5.** *For he did put his life in his hand* The pleadings in this verse, though short, are exceedingly cogent; and the argument is such as could not be resisted.

**Verse 6.** *He shall not be slain.* In consequence of this oath, we may suppose he issued orders contrary to those which he had given the preceding day.

**Verse 7.** *He was in his presence, as in times past.* By Jonathan's advice he had secreted himself on that day on which he was to have been

assassinated: the king having sworn that he should not be slain, David resumes his place in the palace of Saul.

**Verse 9. *And the evil spirit from the Lord*** His envy and jealousy again returned, producing distraction of mind, which was exacerbated by diabolic influence. See on 1 Samuel 16:14.

**Verse 10. *But he slipped away*** He found he could not trust Saul; and therefore was continually on his watch. His agility of body was the means of his preservation at this time.

**Verse 11. *To slay him in the morning*** When they might be able to distinguish between him and Michal his wife; for, had they attempted his life in the night season, there would have been some danger to Michal's life. Besides, Saul wished to represent him as a traitor; and consequently an attack upon him was justifiable at any time, even in the fullest daylight.

**Verse 12. *Let David down through a window*** As Saul's messengers were sent to David's house to watch him, they would naturally guard the gate, or lie in wait in that place by which David would come out. Michal, seeing this let him down to the ground through a window probably at the back part of the house; and there being neither entrance nor issue that way, the liers in wait were easily eluded.

**Verse 13. *Michal took an image*** אֶת הַתְּרָפִים *eth hatteraphim*, the teraphim. The Hebrew word appears to mean any kind of image, in any kind of form, as a representative of some reality. Here it must have been something in the human form; because it was intended to represent a man lying in bed indisposed.

***A pillow of goats' hair*** Perhaps she formed the appearance of a sick man's head muffled up by this pillow or bag of goats' hair. So I think the original might be understood. The goats' hair was merely accidental; unless we could suppose that it was designed to represent the hair of David's head, which is not improbable.

**Verse 17. *Let me go; why should I kill thee?*** That is, If thou do not let me go, I will kill thee. This she said to excuse herself to her father: as a wife she could do not less than favor the escape of her husband, being perfectly satisfied that there was no guilt in him. It is supposed that it was

on this occasion that David wrote the fifty-ninth Psalm, Deliver me from mine enemies, etc.

**Verse 18. *David fled, and escaped-to Samuel*** He, no doubt, came to this holy man to ask advice; and Samuel thought it best to retain him for the present, with himself at Naioth, where it is supposed he had a school of prophets.

**Verse 20. *The company of the prophets prophesying*** Employed in religious exercises.

***Samuel-appointed over them*** Being head or president of the school at this place.

***The Spirit of God was upon the messengers*** They partook of the same influence, and joined in the same exercise; and thus were prevented from seizing David.

**Verse 23. *He went on, and prophesied*** The Divine Spirit seemed to have seized him at the well of Sechu; and he went on from that prophesying-praying, singing praises, etc.; till he came to Naioth.

**Verse 24. *He stripped off his clothes*** Threw off his royal robes or military dress, retaining only his tunic; and continued so all that day and all that night, uniting with the sons of the prophets in prayers, singing praises, and other religious exercises, which were unusual to kings and warriors; and this gave rise to the saying, Is Saul also among the prophets? By bringing both him and his men thus under a Divine influence, God prevented them from injuring the person of David. See the notes on 1 Samuel 10:6, etc.; and see my sermon on The Christian Prophet and his Work.

## CHAPTER 20

*David complains to Jonathan of Saul's enmity against him; Jonathan comforts him, 1-10. They walk out into the field, and renew their covenant, 11-17. David asks Jonathan's leave to absent himself from Saul's court; and Jonathan informs him how he shall ascertain the disposition of his father towards him, 18-23. David hides himself; is missed by Saul; Jonathan is questioned concerning his absence; makes an excuse for David; Saul is enraged, and endeavors to kill Jonathan, 24-33. Jonathan goes out to the field; gives David the sign which they had agreed on, and by which he was to know that the king had determined to take away his life, 34-39. He sends his servant back into the city; and then he and David meet, renew their covenant, and have a very affectionate parting, 40-42.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 1.** *David fled from Naioth* On hearing that Saul had come to that place, knowing that he was no longer in safety, he fled for his life.

**Verse 2.** *My father will do nothing* Jonathan thought that his father could have no evil design against David, because of the oath which he had sworn to himself 1 Samuel 19:6; and at any rate, that he would do nothing against David without informing him.

**Verse 3.** *There is but a step between me and death.* My life is in the most imminent danger. Your father has, most assuredly, determined to destroy me.

The same figure used here, there is but a step between me and death, may be found in Juvenal, who, satirizing those who risk their lives for the sake of gain in perilous voyages, speaks thus:—

*I nune et ventis animam committe, dolato  
Confisus ligno, digitis a morte remotus  
Quatuor aut septem, si sit latissima teda.*



*“Go now, and commit thy life to the winds,  
trusting to a hewn plank, four or seven fingers thick,  
if the beam out of which it has been cut have been large enough.”*

**Verse 5. *To-morrow is the new moon*** The months of the Hebrews were lunar months, and they reckoned from new moon to new moon. And as their other feasts, particularly the passover, were reckoned according to this, they were very scrupulous in observing the first appearance of each new moon. On these new moons they offered sacrifices, and had a feast; as we learn from Numbers 10:10; 28:11. And we may suppose that the families, on such occasions, sacrificed and feasted together. To this David seems to refer; but the gathering together all the families of a whole tribe seems to have taken place only once in the year. There is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family, 1 Samuel 20:6.

**Verse 8. *If there be in me iniquity*** If thou seest that I am plotting either against the state, or the life of thy father, then slay me thyself.

**Verse 10. *Who shall tell me?*** Who shall give me the necessary information? What means wilt thou use to convey this intelligence to me?

**Verse 11. *Come, and let us go out into the field*** In answer to David's question, he now shows him how he shall convey this intelligence to him.

**Verse 12. *Jonathan said-O Lord God of Israel*** There is, most evidently, something wanting in this verse. The Septuagint has, The Lord God of Israel doth KNOW. The Syriac and Arabic, The Lord God of Israel is WITNESS. Either of these makes a good sense. But two of Dr. Kennicott's MSS. supply the word חַי *chai*, “liveth;” and the text reads thus, As the Lord God of Israel LIVETH, when I have sounded my father-if there be good, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee, the Lord do so and much more to Jonathan. This makes a still better sense.

**Verse 13. *The Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father.*** From this, and other passages here it is evident that Jonathan knew that the Lord had appointed David to the kingdom.

**Verse 14. *Show me the kindness of the Lord*** When thou comest to the kingdom, if I am alive, thou shalt show kindness to me, and thou shalt continue that kindness to my family after me.

**Verse 20. *I well shoot three arrows*** Jonathan intended that David should stay at the stone Ezel, where probably there was some kind of cave, or hiding place; that, to prevent all suspicion, he would not go to him himself, but take his servant into the fields, and pretend to be exercising himself in archery; that he would shoot three arrows, the better to cover his design; and that, if he should say to his servant, who went to bring back the arrows, “The arrows are on this side of thee,” this should be a sign to David that he might safely return to court, no evil being designed; but if he should say, “The arrows are beyond thee,” then David should escape for his life, Saul having determined his destruction.

**Verse 25. *The king sat upon his seat*** It seems that there was one table for Saul, Jonathan, David, and Abner; Saul having the chief seat, that next to the wall. As only four sat at this table, the absence of any one would soon be noticed.

**Verse 29. *Our family hath a sacrifice*** Such sacrifices were undoubtedly festal ones; the beasts slain for the occasion were first offered to God, and their blood poured out before him; afterwards all that were bidden to the feast ate of the flesh. This was a family entertainment, at the commencement of which God was peculiarly honored.

**Verse 30. *Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman*** This clause is variously translated and understood. The Hebrew might be translated, Son of an unjust rebellion; that is, “Thou art a rebel against thy own father.” The Vulgate, *Fili mulieris virum ultro rapiantis*; “Son of the woman who, of her own accord, forces the man.” The Septuagint is equally curious, **υιε κορασιων αυτομολουντων**; “Son of the damsels who came of their own accord.” Were these the meaning of the Hebrew, then the bitter reflection must refer to some secret transaction between Saul and Jonathan’s mother; which certainly reflects more dishonor on himself than on his brave son. Most sarcasms bear as hard upon the speaker, as they do on him against whom they are spoken. Abusive language always argues a mean, weak, and malevolent heart.

**Verse 34. *Jonathan arose-in fierce anger*** We should probably understand this rather of Jonathan’s grief than of his anger, the latter clause explaining the former: for he was grieved for David. He was grieved for his father—he was grieved for his friend.

**Verse 38. *Make speed, haste, stay not.*** Though these words appear to be addressed to the lad, yet they were spoken to David, indicating that his life was at stake, and only a prompt flight could save him.

**Verse 40. *Jonathan gave his artillery*** I believe this to be the only place in our language where the word artillery is not applied to cannon or ordnance. The original (כֶּלִי keley) signifies simply instruments, and here means the bow, quiver, and arrows.

**Verse 41. *Until David exceeded.*** David's distress must, in the nature of things, be the greatest. Besides his friend Jonathan, whom he was now about to lose for ever, he lost his wife, relatives, country; and, what was most afflictive, the altars of his God, and the ordinances of religion.

Saul saw David's growing popularity, and was convinced of his own maladministration. He did not humble himself before God, and therefore became a prey to envy, pride, jealousy, cruelty, and every other malevolent temper. From him David had every thing to fear, and therefore he thought it was safer to yield to the storm, than attempt to brave it; though he could have even raised a very powerful party in Israel, had he used the means which were so much in his power. But as he neither sought nor affected the kingdom, he left it to the providence of God to bring him in by such means, at such a way, and in such a time, as was most suited to his godly wisdom. He that believeth shall not make haste: God's way and time are ever the best; and he who, even in God's way, runs before he is sent, runs at random; runs without light, and without Divine strength. Feeble, therefore, must be his own might, his own counsel, and his own wisdom: though he encompass himself with his own sparks yet this hath he at the Lord's hand-he shalt lie down in sorrow.

## CHAPTER 21

*David comes to Ahimelech at Nob, receives provisions from him, and the sword of Goliath; and is noticed by Doeg, one of the servants of Saul, 1-9. He leaves Nob, and goes to Achish, king of Gath, 10. But on being recognised as the vanquisher of Goliath by the servants of Achish, he feigns himself deranged, and Achish sends him away, 11-15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 1. *Then came David to Nob*** There were two places of this name, one on this side, the second on the other side of Jordan; but it is generally supposed that Nob, near Gibeah of Benjamin, is the place here intended; it was about twelve miles from Jerusalem.

***Why art thou alone*** Ahimelech probably knew nothing of the difference between Saul and David; and as he knew him to be the king's son-in-law, he wondered to see him come without any attendants.

**Verse 2. *The king hath commanded me a business*** All said here is an untruth, and could not be dictated by the Spirit of the Lord; but there is no reason to believe that David was under the influence of Divine inspiration at this time. It is well known that from all antiquity it was held no crime to tell a lie, in order to save life. Thus Diphilus:—

ἕπολαμβανω το ψευδος επι σωτηρια λεγομενον,  
ουδεν περιποιεισθαι δυσχερες.

*“I hold it right to tell a lie, in order to procure my personal safety; nothing should be avoided in order to save life.”*

A heathen may say or sing thus; but no Christian can act thus, and save his soul, though he by doing so may save his life.

**Verse 6. *So the priest gave him hallowed bread*** To this history our Lord alludes, Mark 2:25, in order to show that in cases of absolute necessity a breach of the ritual law was no sin. It was lawful for the priests only to eat

the shew-bread; but David and his companions were starving, no other bread could be had at the time, and therefore he and his companions ate of it without sin.

**Verse 7. *Detained before the Lord*** Probably fulfilling some vow to the Lord, and therefore for a time resident at the tabernacle.

***And his name was Doeg*** From 1 Samuel 22:9 we learn that this man betrayed David's secret to Saul, which caused him to destroy the city, and slay eighty-five priests. We learn from its title that the fifty-second Psalm was made on this occasion; but titles are not to be implicitly trusted.

**Verse 9. *The sword of Goliath*** It has already been conjectured (see 1 Samuel 17:1-58) that the sword of Goliath was laid up as a trophy in the tabernacle.

**Verse 10. *Went to Achish the king of Gath.*** This was the worst place to which he could have gone: it was the very city of Goliath, whom he had slain, and whose sword he now wore; and he soon found, from the conversation of the servants of Achish, that his life was in the most imminent danger in this place.

**Verse 13. *And he changed his behavior*** Some imagine David was so terrified at the danger to which he was now exposed, that he was thrown into a kind of frenzy, accompanied with epileptic fits. This opinion is countenanced by the Septuagint, who render the passage thus: **ιδου ιδετε ανδρα επιλητον**; "Behold, ye see an epileptic man. Why have ye introduced him to me?" **μη ελαττουμαι επιληπτων εγω**; "Have I any need of epileptics, that ye have brought him to have his fits before me, (**επιληπτευσθαι προς με**)?" It is worthy of remark, that the spittle falling upon the beard, i.e., slavering or frothing at the mouth, is a genuine concomitant of an epileptic fit.

If this translation be allowed, it will set the conduct of David in a clearer point of view than the present translation does. But others think the whole was a feigned conduct, and that he acted the part of a lunatic or madman in order to get out of the hands of Achish and his courtiers. Many vindicate this conduct of David; but if mocking be catching, according to the proverb, he who feigns himself to be mad may, through the just judgment of God, become so. I dare not be the apologist of insincerity or lying.

Those who wish to look farther into this subject may consult Dr. Chandler, Mr. Saurin, and Ortlob, in the first volume of Dissertations, at the end of the Dutch edition of the *Critici Sacri*.

**Verse 15.** *Shall this fellow come into my house?* I will not take into my service a man who is liable to so grievous a disease. Chandler, who vindicates David's feigning himself, mad, concludes thus: "To deceive the deceiver is in many instances meritorious, in none criminal. And what so likely to deceive as the very reverse of that character which they had so misconstrued? He was undone as a wise man, he had a chance to escape as a madman; he tried, and the experiment succeeded." I confess I can neither feel the force nor the morality of this. Deceit and hypocrisy can never be pleasing in the sight of God.

## CHAPTER 22

*David flees to the cave of Adullam, where he is joined by four hundred men of various descriptions, 1, 2. He goes afterwards to Moab; and by the advice of the prophet Gad, to the forest of Hareth, 3-5. Saul, suspecting his servants of infidelity, upbraids them, 6-8. Doeg informs him of David's coming to Nob; of his being entertained by Ahimelech; on which Saul slays Ahimelech and all the priests, to the number of eighty-five, and destroys the city of Nob, 9-19. Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, only escapes; he joins with David, by whom he is assured of protection, 20-23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22

**Verse 1. *The cave Adullam*** This was in the tribe of Judah, and, according to Eusebius and Jerome, ten miles eastward of what they call Eleutheropolis.

**Verse 2. *And every one that was in distress-debt-discontented*** It is very possible that these several disaffected and exceptionable characters might at first have supposed that David, unjustly persecuted, would be glad to avail himself of their assistance that he might revenge himself upon Saul, and so they in the mean time might profit by plunder, etc. But if this were their design they were greatly disappointed, for David never made any improper use of them. They are never found plundering or murdering; on the contrary, they always appear under good discipline, and are only employed in services of a beneficent nature, and in defense of their country. Whatever they were before they came to David, we find that he succeeded in civilizing them, and making profitable to the state those who were before unprofitable. It is not necessary to strain the words of the original in order to prove that these were oppressed people, and not exceptionable characters, as some have done.

**Verse 3. *He said unto the king of Moab*** David could not trust his parents within the reach of Saul, and he found it very inconvenient to them to be obliged to go through all the fatigues of a military life, and therefore

begs the king of Moab to give them shelter. The king of Moab, being one of Saul's enemies, would be the more ready to oblige a person from whom he might at least expect friendship, if not considerable services.

**Verse 5. *Get thee into the land of Judah*** Gad saw that in this place alone he could find safety.

**Verse 6. *Saul abode in Gibeah*** Saul and his men were in pursuit of David, and had here, as is the general custom in the East, encamped on a height, for so Ramah should be translated, as in the margin. His spear, the ensign of power (see on 1 Samuel 18:11,) was at hand, that is stuck in the ground where he rested, which was the mark to the soldiers that there was their general's tent.

***And all his servants were standing about him*** That is, they were encamped around him, or perhaps here there is a reference to a sort of council of war called by Saul for the purpose of delivering the speech recorded in the following verses.

**Verse 8. *There is none that showeth me*** He conjectured that Jonathan had made a league with David to dethrone him, and he accuses them of disloyalty for not making the discovery of this unnatural treason. Now it was impossible for any of them to show what did not exist, no such league having ever been made between David and Jonathan.

**Verse 9. *Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul*** In 1 Samuel 21:7 he is said to be the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul, and the Septuagint intimate that he was over the mules of Saul. Probably he was what we call the king's equery or groom.

**Verse 10. *And he inquired of the Lord for him*** This circumstance is not related in history; but it is probably true, as David would most naturally wish to know where to direct his steps in this very important crisis.

**Verse 14. *And who is so faithful*** The word **נֶאֱמָן** neeman, which we here translate faithful, is probably the name of an officer. See the note on Numbers 12:7.

**Verse 15. *Did I then begin to inquire of God*** He probably means that his inquiring now for David was no new thing, having often done so before,



and without ever being informed it was either wrong in itself, or displeasing to the king. Nor is it likely that Ahimelech knew of any disagreement between Saul and David. He knew him to be the king's son-in-law, and he treated him as such.

**Verse 17. *But the servants of the king would not*** They dared to disobey the commands of the king in a case of such injustice, inhumanity, and irreligion.

**Verse 18. *And Doeg-fell upon the priests*** A ruthless Edomite, capable of any species of iniquity.

***Fourscore and five persons*** The Septuagint read **τριακοσιους και πεντε ανδρας**, three hundred and five men; and Josephus has three hundred and eighty-five men. Probably the eighty-five were priests; the three hundred, the families of the priests; three hundred and eighty-five being the whole population of Nob.

***That did wear a linen ephod.*** That is, persons who did actually administer, or had a right to administer, in sacred things. The linen ephod was the ordinary clothing of the priests.

**Verse 19. *And Nob-smote he with the edge of the sword*** This is one of the worst acts in the life of Saul; his malice was implacable, and his wrath was cruel, and there is no motive of justice or policy by which such a barbarous act can be justified.

**Verse 20. *Abiathar, escaped*** This man carried with him his sacerdotal garments, as we find from 1 Samuel 23:6, 9.

**Verse 22. *I knew it that day*** When I saw Doeg there, I suspected he would make the matter known to Saul.

***I have occasioned the death of all the persons*** I have been the innocent cause of their destruction.

**Verse 23. *He that seeketh my life seeketh thy life*** The enmity of Saul is directed against thee as well as against me, and thou canst have no safety but in being closely attached to me; and I will defend thee even at the risk of my own life. This he was bound in duty and conscience to do.

## CHAPTER 23

*David succours Keilah, besieged by the Philistines; defeats them, and delivers the city, 1-6. Saul, hearing that David was at Keilah, determines to come and seize him, 7, 8. David inquires of the Lord concerning the fidelity of the men of Keilah towards him; is informed that if he stays in the city, the men of Keilah will betray him to Saul, 9-12. David and his men escape from the city, and come to the wilderness of Ziph, 13-15. Jonathan meets David in the wood of Ziph, strengthens his hand in God, and they renew their covenant, 16-18. The Ziphites endeavor to betray David to Saul, but he and his men escape to Maon, 19-22. Saul comes to Maon; and having surrounded the mountain on which David and his men were, they must inevitably have fallen into his hands, had not a messenger come to call Saul to the succor of Judah, then invaded by the Philistines, 25-27. Saul leaves the pursuit of David, and goes to succor the land; and David escapes to En-gedi, 28, 29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 23

**Verse 1. *The Philistines fight against Keilah*** Keilah was a fortified town in the tribe of Judah near to Eleutheropolis, on the road to Hebron.

***Rob the threshing-floors.*** This was an ancient custom of the Philistines, Midianites, and others. See Judges 6:4. When the corn was ripe and fit to be threshed, and they had collected it at the threshing-floors, which were always in the open field, then their enemies came upon them and spoiled them of the fruits of their harvest.

**Verse 2. *Therefore David inquired of the Lord*** In what way David made this inquiry we are not told, but it was probably by means of Abiathar; and therefore I think, with Houbigant that the sixth verse should be read immediately after the first. The adventure mentioned here was truly noble. Had not David loved his country, and been above all motives of private and personal revenge, he would have rejoiced in this invasion of Judah as producing a strong diversion in his favor, and embroiling his inveterate enemy. In most cases a man with David's wrongs would have joined with

the enemies of his country, and avenged himself on the author of his adversities; but he thinks of nothing but succouring Keilah, and using his power and influence in behalf of his brethren! This is a rare instance of disinterested heroism.

***The Lord said-Go and smite*** He might now go with confidence, being assured of success. When God promises success, who need be afraid of the face of any enemy?

**Verse 4. *David inquired of the Lord yet again*** This was to satisfy his men, who made the strong objections mentioned in the preceding verse.

**Verse 5. *Brought away their cattle*** The forage and spoil which the Philistines had taken, driving the country before them round about Keilah.

**Verse 6. *Came down with an ephod.*** I think this verse should come immediately after 1 Samuel 23:1. See the note there.

**Verse 8. *Saul called all the people together*** That is, all the people of that region or district, that they might scour the country, and hunt out David from all his haunts.

**Verse 9. *Bring hither the ephod.*** It seems as if David himself, clothed with the ephod, had consulted the Lord; and 1 Samuel 23:10-12 contain the words of the consultation, and the Lord's answer. But see on 1 Samuel 23:2.

**Verse 11. — 12.** In these verses we find the following questions and answers:-David said, Will Saul come down to Keilah? And the Lord said, He will come down. Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up. In this short history we find an ample proof that there is such a thing as contingency in human affairs; that is, God has poised many things between a possibility of being and not being, leaving it to the will of the creature to turn the scale. In the above answers of the Lord the following conditions were evidently implied:-IF thou continue in Keilah, Saul will certainly come down; and IF Saul come down, the men of Keilah will deliver thee into his hands. Now though the text positively asserts that Saul would come to Keilah, yet he did not come; and that the men of Keilah would deliver David into his hand, yet David was not thus delivered to him. And

why? Because David left Keilah; but had he stayed, Saul would have come down, and the men of Keilah would have betrayed David. We may observe from this that, however positive a declaration of God may appear that refers to any thing in which man is to be employed, the prediction is not intended to suspend or destroy free agency, but always comprehends in it some particular condition.

**Verse 12.** See Clarke on “1 Samuel 23:11”.

**Verse 14. *Wilderness of Ziph*** Ziph was a city in the southern part of Judea, not far from Carmel.

**Verse 16. *And Jonathan-strengthened his hand in God.*** It is probable that there was always a secret intercourse between David and Jonathan, and that by this most trusty friend he was apprised of the various designs of Saul to take away his life. As Jonathan well knew that God had appointed David to the kingdom, he came now to encourage him to trust in the Most High, and to assure him that the hand of Saul should not prevail against him; and at this interview they renewed their covenant of friendship. Now all this Jonathan could do, consistently with his duty to his father and his king. He knew that David had delivered the kingdom; he saw that his father was ruling unconstitutionally; and he knew that God had appointed David to succeed Saul. This he knew would come about in the order of Providence; and neither he nor David took one step to hasten the time. Jonathan, by his several interferences, prevented his father from imbruing his hands in innocent blood: a more filial and a more loyal part he could not have acted; and therefore, in his attachment to David, he is wholly free of blame.

**Verse 25. *The wilderness of Maon.*** Maon was a mountainous district in the most southern parts of Judah. Calmet supposes it to be the city of Menois, which Eusebius places in the vicinity of Gaza; and the Maenaemi Castrum, which the Theodosian code places near to Beersheba.

**Verse 26. *Saul went on this side of the mountain*** Evidently not knowing that David and his men were on the other side.

**Verse 27. *There came a messenger*** See the providence of God exerted for the salvation of David’s life! David and his men are almost surrounded by Saul and his army, and on the point of being taken, when a messenger

arrives and informs Saul that the Philistines had invaded the land! But behold the workings of Providence! God had already prepared the invasion of the land by the Philistines, and kept Saul ignorant how much David was in his power; but as his advanced guards and scouts must have discovered him in a very short time, the messenger arrives just at the point of time to prevent it. Here David was delivered by God, and in such a manner too as rendered the Divine interposition visible.

**Verse 28. *They called that place Sela-hammah-lekoth.*** That is, the rock of divisions; because, says the Targum, the heart of the king was divided to go hither and thither. Here Saul was obliged to separate himself from David, in order to go and oppose the invading Philistines.

**Verse 29. *Strong holds at En-gedi.*** En-gedi was situated near to the western coast of the Dead Sea, not far from Jeshimon: it literally signifies the kid's well, and was celebrated for its vineyards, So 1:14. It was also celebrated for its balm. It is reported to be a mountainous territory, filled with caverns; and consequently proper for David in his present circumstances.

How threshing-floors were made among the ancients, we learn from CATO, Deuteronomy Revelation Rustica, chap. 91, and 129. And as I believe it would be an excellent method to make the most durable and efficient barn-floors, I will set it down:—

Aream sic facito. Locum ubi facies confodito; postea amurca conspergito bene, sinitoque combibat. Postea communito glebas bene. Deinde coaequato, et paviculis verberato. Postea denuo amurca conspergito, sinitoque arescat. Si ita feceris neque formicae nocebunt, neque herbae nascentur: et cum pluerit, lutum non erit. "Make a threshing-floor thus: dig the place thoroughly; afterwards sprinkle it well with the lees of oil, and give it time to soak in. Then beat the clods very fine, make it level, and beat it well down with a paver's rammer. When this is done, sprinkle it afresh with the oil lees, and let it dry. This being done, the mice cannot burrow in it, no grass can grow through it, nor will the rain dissolve the surface to raise mud."

The directions of COLUMELLA are nearly the same; but as there are some differences of importance, I will subjoin his account:—

Area quoque si terrena erit, ut sit ad trituram satis habilis, primum radatur, deinde confodiatur, permixtis paleis cum amurca, quae salem non accepit, extergatur; nam ea res a populatione murium formicarumque frumenta defendit. Tum aequate paviculis, vel molari lapide condensetur, et rursus subjectis paleis inculcetur, atque ita solibus siccanda relinquatur.

Deuteronomy Revelation Rustica, lib. ii., c. 20. "If you would have a threshing-floor made on the open ground, that it may be proper for the purpose, first pare off the surface, then let it be well digged, and mixed with lees of oil, unsalted, with which chaff has been mingled, for this prevents the mice and ants from burrowing and injuring the corn. Then level it with a paver's rammer, or press it down with a millstone. Afterwards scatter chaff over it, tread it down, and leave it to be dried by the sun."

This may be profitably used within doors, as well as in the field; and a durable and solid floor is a matter of very great consequence to the husbandman, as it prevents the flour from being injured by sand or dust.

## CHAPTER 24

*Saul is informed that David is at En-gedi, and goes to seek him with three thousand men, 1, 2. He goes into a cave to repose, where David and his men lay hid; who, observing this, exhort David to take away his life: David refuses, and contents himself with privily cutting off Saul's skirt, 3-7. When Saul departed, not knowing what was done, David called after him; showed him that his life had been in his power; expostulates strongly with him; and appeals to God, the Judge of his innocence, 8-15. Saul confesses David's uprightness, acknowledges his obligation to him for sparing his life; and causes him to swear that, when he should come to the kingdom, he would not destroy his seed, 17-21. Saul returns home, and David and his men stay in the hold, 22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 24

**Verse 1. Saul was returned** It is very probable that it was only a small marauding party that had made an excursion in the Israelitish borders, and this invasion was soon suppressed.

**Verse 2. Rocks of the wild goats.** The original (צורי היעלים) tsurey haiyeelim) is variously understood. The VULGATE makes a paraphrase: Super abruptissimas petras quae solis ibicibus perviae sunt; "On the most precipitous rocks over which the ibexes alone can travel." The TARGUM: the caverns of the rocks. The SEPTUAGINT make the original a proper name; for out of צורי היעלים tsurey haiyeelim, they make σαδδαιεμ Saddaiem, and in some copies αειαμειν Aeiamain, which are evidently corruptions of the Hebrew.

**Verse 3. The sheep-cotes** Caves in the rocks, in which it is common, even to the present time, for shepherds and their flocks to lodge. According to Strabo there are caverns in Syria, one of which is capable of containing four thousand men: ὦν ἐν καὶ τετρακισχιλίου ἀνθρώπων δεξασθαι δυναμένον; lib. xvi. p. 1096. Edit. 1707.

***Saul went in to cover his feet*** Perhaps this phrase signifies exactly what the Vulgate has rendered it, ut purparet ventrem. The Septuagint, the Targum, and the Arabic understand it in the same way. It is likely that, when he had performed this act of necessity, he lay down to repose himself, and it was while he was asleep that David cut off the skirt of his robe. It is strange that Saul was not aware that there might be men lying in wait in such a place; and the rabbins have invented a most curious conceit to account for Saul's security: "God, foreseeing that Saul would come to this cave, caused a spider to weave her web over the mouth of it, which, when Saul perceived, he took for granted that no person had lately been there, and consequently he entered it without suspicion." This may be literally true; and we know that even a spider in the hand of God may be the instrument of a great salvation. This is a Jewish tradition, and one of the most elegant and instructive in their whole collection.

***David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.*** This is no hyperbole; we have not only the authority of Strabo as above mentioned, but we have the authority of the most accurate travelers, to attest the fact of the vast capacity of caves in the East.

Dr. Pococke observes: "Beyond the valley (of Tekoa) there is a very large grotto, which the Arabs call El Maamah, a hiding place; the high rocks on each side of the valley are almost perpendicular, and the way to the grotto is by a terrace formed in the rock, which is very narrow. There are two entrances into it; we went by the farthest, which leads by a narrow passage into a large grotto, the rock being supported by great natural pillars; the top of it rises in several parts like domes; the grotto is perfectly dry. There is a tradition that the people of the country, to the number of thirty thousand, retired into this grotto to avoid a bad air. This place is so strong that one would imagine it to be one of the strong holds of En-gedi, to which David and his men fled from Saul; and possibly it may be that very cave in which he cut off Saul's skirt, for David and his men might with great ease lie hid there and not be seen by him." -Pococke's Travels, vol. ii., part 1, p. 41.

**Verse 4. *And the men of David said*** We know not to what promise of God the men of David refer; they perhaps meant no more than to say,



“Behold, the Lord hath delivered thine enemy into thy land, now do to him as he wishes to do to thee.”

**Then David arose** Though I have a high opinion of the character of David, yet the circumstances of the case seem to indicate that he arose to take away the life of Saul, and that it was in reference to this that his heart smote him. It appears that he rose up immediately at the desire of his men to slay his inveterate enemy, and one whom he knew the Lord had rejected; but when about to do it he was prevented by the remonstrance of God in his conscience, and instead of cutting off his head, as he might have done, an act which the laws and usages of war would have justified, he contented himself with cutting off the skirt of his robe; and he did this only to show Saul how much he had been in his power.

**Verse 6. The Lord's anointed** However unworthily Saul was now acting, he had been appointed to his high office by God himself, and he could only be removed by the authority which placed him on the throne. Even David, who knew he was appointed to reign in his stead, and whose life Saul had often sought to destroy, did not conceive that he had any right to take away his life; and he grounds the reasons of his forbearance on this—He is my master, I am his subject. He is the Lord's anointed, and therefore sacred as to his person in the Lord's sight. It is an awful thing to kill a king, even the most untoward, when he has once been constitutionally appointed to the throne. No experiment of this kind has ever succeeded; the Lord abhors king killing. Had David taken away the life of Saul at this time, he would, in the sight of God, have been a murderer.

**Verse 7. Suffered them not to rise against Saul.** As he could restrain them, it was his duty to do so; had he connived at their killing him, David would have been the murderer. In praying for the king we call God the only Ruler of princes, for this simple reason, that their authority is the highest among men, and next to that of God himself; hence he alone is above them. We find this sentiment well expressed by an elegant poet:—

*Regum timendorum in proprios greges,  
Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.*

HORACE, *Odar. lib. iii., Od. i., ver. 5.*

*Kings are supreme over their own subjects;  
Jove is supreme over kings themselves.*

**Verse 12. *The Lord judge between me and thee*** Appeals of this kind to God are the common refuge of the poor and oppressed people. So also among the Hindoos: God will judge between us. Mother Kalee will judge. Sometimes this springs from a consciousness of innocence, and sometimes from a desire of revenge.

**Verse 13. *Wickedness proceeded from the wicked*** This proverb may be thus understood: He that does a wicked act, gives proof thereby that he is a wicked man. From him who is wicked, wickedness will proceed; he who is wicked will add one iniquity to another. Had I conspired to dethrone thee, I should have taken thy life when it was in my power, and thus added wickedness to wickedness.

**Verse 14. *After a dead dog*** A term used among the Hebrews to signify the most sovereign contempt; see 2 Samuel 16:9. One utterly incapable of making the least resistance against Saul, and the troops of Israel. The same idea is expressed in the term flea. The Targum properly expresses both thus: one who is weak, one who is contemptible.

**Verse 15. *The Lord therefore be judge*** Let God determine who is guilty.

**Verse 16. *My son David?*** David had called Saul his master, lord, and king. Saul accosts him here as his son, to show that he felt perfectly reconciled to him, and wished to receive him as formerly into his family.

**Verse 19. *If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?*** Or rather, Will he send him in a good way? But Houbigant translates the whole clause thus: Si quis, inimicum suum reperiens, dimittit eum in viam bonam, redditur ei adomino sua merces; "If a man, finding his enemy, send him by a good way, the Lord will give him his reward." The words which are here put in italic, are not in the Hebrew text, but they are found, at least in the sense, in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic, and seem necessary to complete the sense; therefore, adds Saul, the Lord will reward thee good for what thou hast done unto me.

**Verse 20. *I know well that thou shalt surely be king*** Hebrew, Reigning, thou shalt reign. He knew this before; and yet he continued to pursue him with the most deadly hatred.

**Verse 21. *Swear now*** Saul knew that an oath would bind David, though it was insufficient to bind himself; see 1 Samuel 19:6. He had sworn to his son Jonathan that David should not be slain; and yet sought by all means in his power to destroy him!

**Verse 22. *Saul went home*** Confounded at a sense of his own baseness, and overwhelmed with a sense of David's generosity.

***David and his men gat them up unto the hold.*** Went up to Mizpeh, according to the Syriac and Arabic. David could not trust Saul with his life; the utmost he could expect from him was that he should cease from persecuting him; but even this was too much to expect from a man of such a character as Saul. He was no longer under the Divine guidance; an evil spirit had full dominion over his soul. What God fills not, the devil will occupy.

## CHAPTER 25

*The death of Samuel, 1. The history of Nabal, and his churlishness towards David and his men, 2-12. David, determining to punish him, is appeased by Abigail, Nabal's wife, 13-35. Abigail returns, and tells Nabal of the danger that he has escaped: who on hearing it is thunderstruck, and dies in ten days, 36-38 David, hearing of this, sends and takes Abigail to wife, 39-42. He marries also Ahinoam of Jezreel, Saul having given Michal, David's wife, to Phalti, the son of Laish, 43, 44.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 25

**Verse 1. *And Samuel died*** Samuel lived, as is supposed, about ninety-eight years; was in the government of Israel before Saul from sixteen to twenty years; and ceased to live, according to the Jews, about four months before the death of Saul; but according to Calmet and others, two years. But all this is very uncertain; how long he died before Saul, cannot be ascertained. For some account of his character, see the end of the chapter. {1 Samuel 25:44}

***Buried him in his house*** Probably this means, not his dwelling-house, but the house or tomb he had made for his sepulture; and thus the Syriac and Arabic seem to have understood it.

***David-went down to the wilderness of Paran.*** This was either on the confines of Judea, or in Arabia Petraea, between the mountains of Judah and Mount Sinai; it is evident from the history that it was not far from Carmel, on the south confines of Judah.

**Verse 3. *The name of the man was Nabal*** The word נבל nabal signifies to be foolish, base, or villanous; and hence the Latin word nebulo, knave, is supposed to be derived.

**The name of his wife Abigail** The joy or exultation of my father. A woman of sense and beauty, married to the boor mentioned above, probably because he was rich. Many women have been thus sacrificed.

**Of the house of Caleb** וְהוּא כְּלִבִּי vehu Chalibbi, “he was a Calebite.” But as the word caleb signifies a dog, the Septuagint have understood it as implying a man of a canine disposition, and translate it thus, **καὶ ὁ ἀνθρώπος κύνικος**, he was a doggish man. It is understood in the same way by the Syriac and Arabic.

**Verse 6. Peace be both to thee** This is the ancient form of sending greetings to a friend: Peace to THEE, peace to thy HOUSEHOLD, and peace to all that THOU HAST. That is, May both thyself, thy family, and all that pertain unto thee, be in continual prosperity!

Perhaps David, by this salutation, wished Nabal to understand that he had acted so towards him and his property that nothing had been destroyed, and that all had been protected; see 1 Samuel 25:15-17.

**Verse 7. Thy shepherds which there with us, we hurt them not** It is most evident that David had a claim upon Nabal, for very essential services performed to his herdmen at Carmel. He not only did them no hurt, and took none of their flocks for the supply of his necessities, but he protected them from the rapacity of others; they were a WALL unto us, said Nabal’s servants, both by night and day. In those times, and to the present day, wandering hordes of Arabs, under their several chiefs, think they have a right to exact contributions of provisions, etc., wherever they come; David had done nothing of this kind, but protected them against those who would.

**Verse 8. Whatsoever cometh to thine hand** As thou art making a great feast for thy servants, and I and my men, as having essentially served thee, would naturally come in for a share were we present; send a portion by my ten young men, for me and my men, that we also may rejoice with you. Certainly this was a very reasonable and a very modest request. This mode of address is not unfrequent among the Hindoos: “O father, fill the belly of thy son; he is in distress.”

**Verse 10. Who is David?** Nabal’s answer shows the surliness of his disposition. It was unjust to refuse so reasonable a request; and the manner

of the refusal was highly insulting. It is true what his own servants said of him, He is such a son of Belial that one cannot speak to him, 1 Samuel 25:17.

**Verse 18. *Took two hundred loaves*** The Eastern bread is ordinarily both thin and small; and answers to our cakes.

***Two bottles of wine*** That is, two goat-skins full. The hide is pulled off the animal without ripping up; the places where the legs, etc., were are sewed up, and then the skin appears one large bag. This is properly the Scripture and Eastern bottle. There is one such before me.

***Five sheep*** Not one sheep to one hundred men.

***Clusters of raisins*** Raisins dried in the sun.

***Cakes of figs*** Figs cured, and then pressed together. We receive the former in jars, and the latter in small barrels; and both articles answer the description here given.

Now all this provision was a matter of little worth, and, had it been granted in the first instance, it would have perfectly satisfied David, and secured the good offices of him and his men. Abigail showed both her wisdom and prudence in making this provision. Out of three thousand sheep Nabal could not have missed five; and as this claim was made only in the time of sheep-shearing, it could not have been made more than once in the year: and it certainly was a small price for such important services.

**Verse 20. *She came down-and David-came down*** David was coming down Mount Paran; Abigail was coming down from Carmel. — Calmet.

**Verse 22. *So and more also do God*** Nothing can justify this part of David's conduct. Whatever his provocation might have been, he had suffered, properly speaking, no wrongs; and his resolution to cut off a whole innocent family, because Nabal had acted ungenerously towards him, was abominable and cruel, not to say diabolic. He who attempts to vindicate this conduct of David is, at least constructively, a foe to God and truth. David himself condemns this most rash and unwarrantable conduct, and thanks God for having prevented him from doing this evil, 1 Samuel 25:32, etc.

***Any that pisseth against the wall.*** This expression certainly means either men or dogs, and should be thus translated, if I leave-any male; and this will answer both to men and dogs, and the offensive mode of expression be avoided. I will not enter farther into the subject: Bochart and Calmet have done enough, and more than enough; and in the plainest language too.

**Verse 28. *And evil hath not been found in thee*** Thou hast not committed any act of this kind hitherto.

**Verse 29. *Shall be bound in the bundle of life*** Thy life shall be precious in the sight of the Lord: it shall be found in the bundle of life; it shall be supported by Him who is the Spring and Fountain of life, and ever be found united to those who are most favored by the Almighty.

***Them shall he sling out*** Far from being bound and kept together in union with the Fountain of life, he will cast them off from himself as a stone is cast out from a sling. This betokens both force and violence.

**Verse 37. *His heart died within him, and he became as a stone.*** He was thunderstruck, and was so terrified at the apprehension of what he had escaped, that the fear overcame his mind, he became insensible to all things around him, probably refused all kinds of nourishment, and died in ten days.

**Verse 39. *To take her to him to wife.*** It is likely that he had heard before this that Saul, to cut off all his pretensions to the throne, had married Michal to Phalti; and this justified David in taking Abigail or any other woman; and, according to the then custom, it was not unlawful for David to take several wives. By his marriage with Abigail, it is probable he became possessed of all Nabal's property in Carmel and Maon.

**Verse 43. *David also took Ahinoam*** Many think that this was his wife before he took Abigail; she is always mentioned first in the list of his wives, and she was the mother of his eldest son Ammon.

***Of Jezreel*** There were two places of this name; one in the tribe of Issachar, the other in the tribe of Judah.

**Verse 44. *Phalti*** Called also Phaltiel, 2 Samuel 3:16.

*Of Gallim.* Probably a city or town in the tribe of Benjamin; see Isaiah 10:30. It is likely therefore that Saul chose this man because he was of his own tribe.

IN this chapter we have the account of the death of Samuel, who from his infancy had been devoted to God and the service of his people. He was born at a time in which religion was at a very low ebb in Israel, as there were but very few prophets, and no open vision—scarcely any revelation from God. Those who might be called prophets had no regular ministry of God's word; they were extraordinary messengers sent for a particular purpose, and not continued in the work any longer than the time necessary to deliver their extraordinary message.

Samuel is supposed to have been the first who established academies or schools for prophets, at least we do not hear of them before his time; and it is granted that they continued till the Babylonish captivity. This was a wise institution, and no doubt contributed much to the maintenance of pure religion, and the prevention of idolatry among that people.

Samuel reformed many abuses in the Jewish state, and raised it to a pitch of political consequence to which it had been long a stranger. He was very zealous for the honor of God, and supported the rights of pure religion, of the king, and of the people, against all encroachments. He was chief magistrate in Israel before the appointment of a king, and afterwards he acted as prime minister to Saul, though without being chosen or formally appointed to that station. Indeed, he seems on the whole to have been the civil and ecclesiastical governor, Saul being little more than general of the Israelitish forces.

In his office of minister in the state, he gave the brightest example of zeal, diligence, inflexible integrity, and uncorruptedness. He reproved both the people and the king for their transgressions, with a boldness which nothing but his sense of the Divine authority could inspire, and yet he tempered it with a sweetness which showed the interest he felt in their welfare, and the deep and distressing concern he felt for their back-slidings and infidelities.

He was incorrupt; he received no man's bribe; he had no pension from the state; he enriched none of his relatives from the public purse; left no private debts to be discharged by his country. He was among the Hebrews



what Aristides is said to have been among the Greeks, so poor at his death, though a minister of state, that he did not leave property enough to bury him. Justice was by him duly and impartially administered, and oppression and wrong had no existence.

If there ever was a heaven-born minister, it was Samuel; in whose public and private conduct there was no blemish, and whose parallel cannot be found in the ancient or modern history of any country in the universe.

Let ministers of state who have sought for nothing but their own glory, and have increased the public burdens by their improvident expenditure; who have endeavored, by their wordy representations, to dazzle and elude the people, and impose false grandeur in the place of true greatness and solid prosperity; who have oppressed the many, and enriched the worthless few; fall down at the feet of THIS heaven-born man, and learn, from this immaculate judge of Israel, what a faithful servant to his king, and an incorruptible minister of state, means, and in retiring from their high station, or in going to appear before the judgment-seat of God, see whether, in the presence of their king, and in the face of the thousands of their people, they can boldly say, “Behold, here am I! Witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose ass have I seized? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, by the imposition of heavy taxes for the support of needless expenses, and the payment of venal men? Or of whose hand have I taken any bribe to blind my eyes? Scrutinize my conduct, examine the state of my family, compare their present circumstances with what they were previously to my administration, and see if you can find aught in my hands.” See 1 Samuel 12:1, etc.

O, how seldom in the annals of the world, from the assembled heads of the great body politic, can the departing prime minister hear, “Thou hast not defrauded us, thou hast not oppressed us; neither hast thou taken aught of any man’s hand! “ This voice call be heard from Gilgal; but of what other minister can this be spoken but of Samuel the seer, who was the gift of God’s mercy to the people of Israel; whose memory was too precious to be intrusted to public monuments, but stands, and alas; almost unique in the BOOK OF GOD? Of Daniel, and his administration, I shall have occasion to speak elsewhere.

A prime minister, deeply devoted to God and faithful to his king and to his country, is so rare a character in the world, that when he does occur, he should be held up to public admiration. But I have no parallel for Samuel. See the notes on 1 Samuel 12:1-25 and on 1 Samuel 24:6.

## CHAPTER 26

*The Ziphites inform Saul of David's hiding place, 1. Saul, with three thousand men, goes in pursuit of him, 2, 3. David sends out spies; and finds where Saul had pitched his camp; and he and Abishai come to the camp by night, find all asleep, and bring away Saul's spear, and the cruse of water that was at his head, 4-12. David goes to the opposite hill; awakes Abner, captain of Saul's host; chides him for being so careless of his master's life; and calls on Saul to send one of his servants for the spear; and severely chides him for his continued hostility to him, 13-24. Saul humbles himself to David; promises to persecute him no more; and returns to his own place, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 26

**Verse 1. *The Ziphites came*** This is the second time that these enemies of David endeavored to throw him into the hands of Saul. See 1 Samuel 23:19.

**Verse 2. *Three thousand chosen men*** Though they knew that David was but six hundred strong, yet Saul thought it was not safe to pursue such an able general with a less force than that mentioned in the text; and, that he might the better depend on them, they were all elect or picked men out of the whole of his army.

**Verse 5. *David arose*** As David and his men knew the country, they had many advantages over Saul and his men; and no doubt could often watch them without being discovered.

***Saul lay in the trench*** The word **במעגל** *bammaegal*, which we translate in the trench, and in the margin in the midst of his carriages, is rendered by some in a ring of carriages, and by others in the circle, i.e., which was formed by his troops. Luther himself translates it *wagenburg*, a fortress formed of wagons or carriages.

As **עגל** *agal* signifies any thing round, it may here refer to a round pavilion or tent made for Saul, or else to the form of his camp. The Arabs, to the

present day, always form a circle in their encampments, and put their principal officers in the center.

**Verse 6. *Abishai the son of Zeruiah*** She was David's sister; and therefore Abishai and Joab were nephews to David.

**Verse 8. *God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand*** Here Abishai uses the same language as did David's men, when Saul came into the cave at En-gedi, (see 1 Samuel 24:4, etc.,) and David uses the same language in reply.

**Verse 10. *The Lord shall smite him*** He shall die by a stroke of the Divine judgment; or his day shall come to die—he shall die a natural death; which in the course of things must be before mine, and thus I shall get rid of mine enemy; or he shall descend into the battle, and perish—he shall fall by the enemies of his country. These are the three ordinary ways by which man accomplishes, as a hireling, his day. Murder David could not consider to be lawful; this would have been taking the matter out of God's hand, and this David would not do.

**Verse 12. *David took the spear and the cruse*** The spear, we have already seen, was the emblem of power and regal dignity. But it is usual, in Arab camps, for every man to have his lance stuck in the ground beside him, that he may be ready for action in a moment. The cruse of water resembled, in some measure, the canteens of our soldiers. In such a climate, where water was always scarce, it was necessary for each man to carry a little with him, to refresh him on his march.

***A deep sleep from the Lord*** It is the same word which is used, Genesis 2:21, to describe the sleep which God caused to fall upon Adam, when he formed Eve out of his side.

**Verse 15. *Art not thou a valiant man?*** This is a strong irony. Ye are worthy to die; ye are sons of death—ye deserve death for this neglect of your king. And had not Saul been so deeply affected with David's generosity in preserving his life, he had doubtless put Abner and his chief officers to death; though they were not to blame, as their apparent neglect was the effect of a supernatural sleep.

**Verse 19. *Let him accept an offering*** If God have stirred thee up against me, why, then, let him deliver my life into thy hand, and accept it as a sacrifice. But as the word is מִנְחָה minchah, a gratitude-offering, perhaps the sense may be this: Let God accept a gratitude-offering from thee, for having purged the land of a worker of iniquity; for, were I not such, God would never stir thee up against me.

***But if they be the children of men*** If men have, by false representations, lies, and slanders, stirred thee up against an innocent man, then let them be cursed before the Lord. If I am guilty, I deserve to die; if not, those who seek my life should be destroyed.

***Saying, Go, serve other gods.*** His being obliged to leave the tabernacle, and the place where the true worship of God was performed, and take refuge among idolaters, said in effect, Go, serve other gods.

**Verse 20. *As when one doth hunt a partridge*** It is worthy of remark that the Arabs, observing that partridges, being put up several times, soon become so weary as not to be able to fly; they in this manner hunt them upon the mountains, till at last they can knock them down with their clubs.

It was in this manner that Saul hunted David, coming hastily upon him, and putting him up from time to time, in hopes that he should at length, by frequent repetitions of it, be able to destroy him. See Harmer.

**Verse 21. *I have sinned*** Perhaps the word חַטָּאתִי chatathi, “I have sinned,” should be read, I have erred, or, have been mistaken. I have taken thee to be a very different man from what I find thee to be. Taken literally it was strictly true. He often purposed the spilling of David’s blood; and thus, again and again, sinned against his life.

**Verse 25. *Thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail.*** The Hebrew is גַּם עָשָׂה תַעֲשֶׂה וְגַם יָכֹל תֹּכֹל gam asoh thaaseh, vegam yachol tuchal; “Also in doing thou shalt do, and being able thou shalt be able; which the Targum translates, also in reigning thou shalt reign, and in prospering thou shalt prosper; which in all probability is the meaning.

There is a vast deal of dignity in this speech of David, arising from a consciousness of his own innocence. He neither begs his life from Saul, nor

offers one argument to prevail upon him to desist from his felonious attempts, but refers the whole matter to God, as the judge and vindicator of oppressed innocence. Saul himself is speechless, except in the simple acknowledgment of his sin; and in the behalf of their king not one of his officers has one word to say! It is strange that none of them offered now to injure the person of David; but they saw that he was most evidently under the guardian care of God, and that their master was apparently abandoned by him. Saul invites David to return, but David knew the uncertainty of Saul's character too well to trust himself in the power of this infatuated king. How foolish are the counsels of men against God! When he undertakes to save, who can destroy? And who can deliver out of his hands?

## CHAPTER 27

*David flies to Achish, king of Gath, who receives him kindly, and gives him Ziklag to dwell in, where he continues a year and four months, 1-7. David invades the Geshurites and Amalekites, and leaves neither man nor woman alive, 8, 9. He returns to Achish, and pretends that he had been making inroads on the Israelites, and Achish believes it, 10-12.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 27

**Verse 1. *I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul*** This was a very hasty conclusion: God had so often interposed in behalf of his life, that he was authorized to believe the reverse. God had hitherto confounded all Saul's stratagems, and it was not at all likely that he would now abandon him: there was now no additional reason why he should withdraw from David his helping hand.

**Verse 2. *David arose, and he passed over-unto Achish*** There is not one circumstance in this transaction that is not blameable. David joins the enemies of his God and of his country, acts a most inhuman part against the Geshurites and Amalekites, without even the pretense of a Divine authority; tells a most deliberate falsehood to Achish, his protector, relative to the people against whom he had perpetrated this cruel act; giving him to understand that he had been destroying the Israelites, his enemies. I undertake no defense of this conduct of David; it is all bad, all defenceless; God vindicates him not. The inspired penman tells what he did, but passes no eulogium upon his conduct; and it is false to say that, because these things are recorded, therefore they are approved. In all these transactions David was in no sense a man after God's own heart. Chandler attempts to vindicate all this conduct: those who can receive his saying, let them receive it.

**Verse 3. *Every man with his household*** So it appears that the men who consorted with David had wives and families. David and his company resembled a tribe of the wandering Arabs.

**Verse 5. *Why should thy servant dwell in the royal city*** He seemed to intimate that two princely establishments in the same city were too many. Achish appears to have felt the propriety of his proposal, and therefore appoints him Ziklag.

**Verse 6. *Achish gave him Ziklag*** Ziklag was at first given to the tribe of Judah, but afterwards it was ceded to that of Simeon, Joshua 15:31; 19:5. The Philistines had, however, made themselves masters of it, and held it to the time here mentioned; it then fell into the tribe of Judah again, and continued to be the property of the kings of Judah. This verse is a proof that this book was written long after the days of Samuel, and that it was formed by a later hand, out of materials which had been collected by a contemporary author. See the preface.

**Verse 9. *David smote the land*** Here was a complete extirpation of all these people, not one being left alive, lest he should carry tidings of the disasters of his country! The spoil which David took consisted of sheep, oxen, asses, camels, and apparel.

**Verse 10. *Whither have ye made a road today?*** He had probably been in the habit of making predatory excursions. This seems to be implied in the question of Achish.

**Verse 12. *He hath made his people-utterly to abhor him*** This deception, which Dr. Delaney says “did harm to nobody, and to the account of which he is at an utter loss what degree of guilt to charge,” imposed upon Achish, had the most direct tendency to make him imagine himself secure, while in the utmost danger; and to have a faithful friend and able ally in David, while he was the veriest enemy he could possibly have. Shame on him who becomes the apologist of such conduct! As to Dr. Chandler, he should know that no lie is of the truth, and that all falsity is an abomination to the Lord.



## CHAPTER 28

*The Philistines prepare to attack the Israelites, and Achish informs David that he shall accompany him to battle, 1, 2. Saul, unable to obtain any answer from God, applies to a witch at En-dor to bring up Samuel that he may converse with him on the issue of the war, 3-11. Samuel appears, 12-14. He reproaches Saul with his misconduct, and informs him of his approaching ruin, 15-19. He is greatly distressed; but at the solicitations of the woman and his own servants, he takes some food, and departs the same night, 20-25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 28

**Verse 1. *The Philistines gathered their armies together*** Sir Isaac Newton conjectures that the Philistines had got a great increase to their armies by vast numbers of men which Amasis had driven out of Egypt. This, with Samuel's death, and David's disgrace, were no inconsiderable motives to a new war, front which the Philistines had now every thing to hope.

***Thou shalt go out with me to battle*** This he said, being deceived by what David had told him.

**Verse 2. *Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do*** This was another equivocal answer; and could only be understood by his succeeding conduct. It might imply what he could do in favor of the Philistines against Israel; or in favor of Israel against the Philistines. Achish understood it in the former sense; and therefore he said to David, I will make thee keeper of my head for ever; i.e., Thou shalt be captain of my life-guards.

**Verse 3. *Samuel was dead*** And there was no longer a public accredited prophet to consult.

***Those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards*** See the note on Leviticus 19:31, and Exodus 22:18.

**Verse 5. *When Saul saw*** He saw from the superiority of his enemies, from the state of his army, and especially from his own state towards God, that he had every thing to fear.

**Verse 6. *The Lord answered him not*** He used the three methods by which supernatural intelligence was ordinarily given:—

1. Dreams. — The person prayed for instruction; and begged that God would answer by a significant dream.

2. Urim. — This was a kind of oracular answer given to the high priest when clothed with the ephod, on which were the Urim and Thummim. How these communicated the answer, is not well known.

3. Prophets. — Who were requested by the party concerned to consult the Lord on the subject in question, and to report his answer. The prophets at that time could only be those in the schools of the prophets, which Samuel had established at Naioth and Gibeah. These were the only successors of Samuel that we know of.

**Verse 7. *Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit*** Literally, Seek me a woman, בעלת אוב baalath ob, the mistress of the Obidiah or Pythonic spirit—one who had a familiar spirit, whom she could invoke when she pleased, and receive answers from him relative to futurity.

Strange that a man, who had banished all such from the land, as dangerous to the state, as impostors and deceivers, should now have recourse to them as the only persons in whom he could safely put his confidence in the time in which Jehovah had refused to help him!

***At En-dor.*** This was a city in the valley of Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Gilboa, where the army of Saul had now encamped.

**Verse 8. *Saul disguised himself*** That he might not be known by the woman, lest she, being terrified, should refuse to use her art.

**Verse 11. *Whom shall I bring up*** The woman certainly meant no more than making her familiar personify whomsoever the querist should wish. In the evocation of spirits this is all that, according to the professed rules of their art, such persons pretend to; for over human souls in paradise or in the infernal regions they have no power. If we allow that there is such an

art founded on true principles, all it can pretend to is, to bring up the familiar; cause him when necessary to assume the form and character of some particular person, and to give such notices relative to futurity as he is able to collect. And this even in the cases to which authenticity is generally allowed, is often scanty, vague, and uncertain, for fallen spirits do not abound in knowledge: this is an attribute of God, and rays of this perfection are imparted to pure and holy intelligences; and even Satan himself, as may be seen from most of his temptations, is far from excelling in knowledge. He may be cunning and insidious, but he certainly is not wise and prudent; we in general give this fallen spirit credit for much more wisdom than he possesses.

**Verse 12. *When the woman saw Samuel*** That Samuel did appear on this occasion, is most evident from the text; nor can this be denied from any legitimate mode of interpretation: and it is as evident that he was neither raised by the power of the devil nor the incantations of the witch, for the appearances which took place at this time were such as she was wholly unacquainted with. Her familiar did not appear; and from the confused description she gives, it is fully evident that she was both surprised and alarmed at what she saw, being so widely different from what she expected to see.

**Verse 13. *I saw gods ascending out of the earth.*** The word אלהים **elohim**, which we translate gods, is the word which is used for the Supreme Being throughout the Bible; but all the versions, the Chaldee excepted, translate it in the plural number, as we do. The Chaldee has, I see מלאכא דיי **malacha dayeya**, an angel of the Lord, ascending from the earth. This sight alarmed the woman; it was what she did not expect; in this she could not recognise her familiar, and she was terrified at the appearance.

**Verse 14. *An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle.*** This seems to have been a second apparition; she cannot mean that she had seen gods ascending out of the earth, and these gods were like an old man with a mantle. The angelic appearance first mentioned prepared the way for Samuel; and the whole was done so as to show to the woman that her art had not prevailed in the present instance, and that what was now taking place was wholly independent of her incantations.

***Saul perceived that it was Samuel*** The description was suitable to his person and clothing.

**Verse 15. *Why hast thou disquieted me*** The complaint is not directed against the woman but against Saul. Indeed, her incantations had no influence in the business, and it does not appear that she had commenced her operations before the angels had prepared the way of the prophet, and before the prophet himself had made his appearance.

***That thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.*** In his former difficulties, and when pressed by his enemies, he was in the habit of consulting Samuel; and now he applies to him as his former preceptor. God, he knew, might answer by such a man as Samuel, when he would answer by no other means.

**Verse 16. *Wherefore then dost thou ask of me*** Was ever I wont to give answers that were not dictated by the Lord? It is his counsel alone that I communicate.

**Verse 17. *The Lord hath done to him*** I believe these words are spoken of Saul; and as they are spoken to him, it seems evident that him should be thee. The Vulgate has tibi, the Septuagint σοι, to THEE: and this is the reading of five of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., as well as of both the Bibles printed at Venice in 1518, where we read לך lecha, to THEE, instead of לו lo, to HIM.

***As he spake by me*** Here was no illusion; none but Samuel could say this.

**Verse 18. *Nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek*** See 1 Samuel 15:1-9 and the notes there.

**Verse 19. *To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me*** What an awful message! In the course of the ensuing day thou shalt be slain, thy three sons shall be slain, and the armies of Israel shall be delivered into the hands of the Philistines! Can any person read this, properly considering the situation of this unfortunate monarch, the triumph of the enemies of God, and the speedy ruin in which the godlike Jonathan is about to be involved, without feeling the keenest anguish of heart?

But Samuel says, "He and his sons should be with him." Does not this mean that they were to go to paradise? I suppose it means no more than that they should all die. Yet the paraphrase of the Rev. C. Wesley is beautiful:—

*"What do these solemn words portend?  
A ray of hope when life shall end.  
Thou and thy sons, though slain, shall be  
To-morrow in repose with me.*

*Not in a state of hellish pain,  
If Saul with Samuel do remain:  
Not in a state of damn'd despair,  
If loving Jonathan be there."*

Saul had committed the sin unto death—the sin to be visited with a violent death, while the mercy of God was extended to the soul. Thus say my faith, my hope, and my charity; and doth not the mercy of God say the same?

**Verse 20.** *Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth.* Literally, he fell with his own length, or with the fullness of his stature. He was so overwhelmed with this most dreadful message, that he swooned away, and thus fell at his own length upon the ground. The woman, being terrified, had probably withdrawn to some distance at the first appearance of the prophet; and Saul was left alone with Samuel. After some short time, the woman came again unto Saul, found him sore troubled, and offered him those succours which humanity dictated.

**Verse 23.** *I will not eat.* It is no wonder that not only his strength, but also his appetite, had departed from him.

**And sat upon the bed** Beds or couches were the common places on which the ancients sat to take their repasts.

**Verse 24.** *The woman had a fat calf* The ancients used great despatch in their cookery. In hot countries they could not keep flesh meat by them any length of time; hence they generally kept young animals, such as calves, lambs, and kids, ready for slaughter; and when there was occasion, one of them was killed, and dressed immediately.

***Unleavened bread*** There was not time to bake leavened bread; that would have taken considerable time, in order that the leaven might leaven the whole lump.

**Verse 25. *They rose up, and went away that night.*** The transactions of this chapter occupy one night only. 1. Saul came by night to En-dor, 1 Samuel 28:8. 2. He consulted the woman, and had his conference with Samuel the same night; for no time whatever appears to have been lost after his arrival at En-dor. 3. He was overcome by the heavy tidings which he heard; and which for a time appear to have deprived him of all power. 4. The woman kills a calf; dresses a part; makes and bakes bread; and Saul and his servants eat. And, 5. They rose and went away that night, 1 Samuel 28:25. The next day, in all probability, the battle happened in which Israel was defeated, and Saul and his sons lost their lives.

THERE is a considerable diversity of opinion, both among learned and pious men, relative to the subject mentioned in this chapter, that of raising Samuel from the dead. Some deny the possibility of the thing, and say that it was the devil that personified Samuel; and others, that the whole was the imposition of this cunning woman, and that there was no supernatural agency in the business. This is not a proper place to argue the point. I have given my opinion in the notes. I may sum up in a few particulars.

1. I believe there is a supernatural and spiritual world, in which HUMAN spirits, both good and bad, live in a state of consciousness.
2. I believe there is an invisible world, in which various orders of spirits, not human, live and act.
3. I believe that any of these spirits may, according to the order of God, in the laws of their place of residence, have intercourse with this world, and become visible to mortals.
4. I believe there is a possibility, by arts not strictly good, to evoke and have intercourse with spirits, not HUMAN; and to employ, in a certain limited way, their power and influence.
5. I believe that the woman of En-dor had no power over Samuel; and that no incantation can avail over any departed saint of God, nor indeed over any human disembodied spirit.

6. I believe Samuel did actually appear to Saul; and that he was sent by the especial mercy of God to warn this infatuated king of his approaching death, that he might have an opportunity to make his peace with his Maker.

7. I believe that the woman found, from the appearances, that her real or pretended charms had no effect; and that what now took place came from a totally different disposition of things from those with which she was conversant.

8. I believe that direct, circumstantial, and unequivocal oracles were now delivered concerning things which neither human nor diabolical wisdom could foresee or penetrate; that the defeat of the Israelites, and the death of Saul and his three sons on the following day, were matters which, from their nature, could only be known to God himself; and that no demon or bad spirit could be employed in such a transaction.

## CHAPTER 29

*The Philistines gather their armies together against Israel, and encamp at Aphek; while the Israelites encamp at Jezreel, 1. The lords of the Philistines refuse to let David go to battle with them, lest he should betray them, 2-5. Achish expresses his confidence in David; but begs him to return, 6-10. David and his men return, 11.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 29

**Verse 1. *To Aphek*** This was a place in the valley of Jezreel, between Mounts Tabor and Gilboa.

***Pitched by a fountain*** To be near a fountain, or copious spring of water, was a point of great importance to an army in countries such as these, where water was so very scarce. It is supposed, as William of Tyre says, that it was at this same fountain that Saladin pitched his camp, while Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, pitched his by another fountain between Nazareth and Sephoris; each being anxious to secure that without which it was impossible for their armies to subsist.

**Verse 2. *By hundreds, and by thousands*** They were probably divided, as the Jewish armies, by fifties, hundreds, and thousands; each having its proper officer or captain.

**Verse 3. *These days, or these years*** I suppose these words to mark no definite time, and may be understood thus: "Is not this David, who has been with me for a considerable time?"

**Verse 4. *The princes of the Philistines were wroth*** It is strange that they



**Verse 8. *David said-what have I done?*** Dr. Chandler and others may say what they will to make David act a consistent part in this business; but it is most evident, whatever his intentions might be as to the part he was to take in the approaching battle, he did intend to persuade Achish that he would fight against Israel; and affects to feel his reputation injured by not being permitted on this occasion to show his fidelity to the king of Gath.

It was in the order of God's gracious providence that the Philistine lords refused to let David go with them to this battle. Had he gone, he had his choice of two sins-First, If he had fought for the Philistines, he would have fought against God and his country. Secondly If he had in the battle gone over to the Israelites, he would have deceived and become a traitor to the hospitable Achish. God, therefore, so ordered it in his mercy that he was not permitted to go to a battle in which he was sure to be disgraced, whatever side he took, or with what success soever he might be crowned.

**Verse 9. *As an angel of God*** There is some reason to think that Achish had actually embraced or was favourably disposed towards the Jewish religion. He speaks here of the angels of God, as a Jew might be expected to speak; and in 1 Samuel 29:6 he appeals to, and swears by Jehovah; which, perhaps, no Philistine ever did. It is possible that he might have learned many important truths from David, during the time he sojourned with him.

**Verse 10. *With thy master's servants*** Who were these? has been very properly asked; and to this question there can be but two answers:—

1. The six hundred Israelites which were with him; and who might still be considered the subjects of SAUL, though now residing in a foreign land.
2. The servants of ACHISH; i.e., David's men thus considered; because on his coming to Gath, he had in effect given up himself and his men to Achish. But Saul may be the master to whom Achish refers, and the words convey a delicate information to David that he is no vassal, but still at liberty.

## CHAPTER 30

*While David is absent with the army of Achish, the Amalekites invade Ziklag, and burn it with fire, and carry away captive David's wives, and those of his men, 1, 2. David and his men return; and, finding the desolate state of their city, are greatly affected, 3-5. The men mutiny, and threaten to stone David, who encourages himself in the Lord, 6. David inquires of the Lord, and is directed to pursue the Amalekites, with the promise that he shall recover all, 7, 8. He and his men begin the pursuit, but two hundred, through fatigue are obliged to stay behind at the brook Besor, 9, 10. They find a sick Egyptian, who directs them in their pursuit, 11-15. David finds the Amalekites secure, feasting on the spoils they had taken; he attacks and destroys the whole host, except four hundred, who escape on camels, 16, 17. The Israelites recover their wives, their families, and all their goods, 18-20. They come to the two hundred who were so faint as not to be able to pursue the enemy, with whom they divide the spoil; and this becomes a statute in Israel, 21-25. David sends part of the spoil which he had taken to different Jewish cities, which had suffered by the incursion of the Amalekites; and where David and his anew had been accustomed to resort, 26-31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 30

**Verse 1. *On the third day*** This was the third day after he had left the Philistine army at Aphek. Calmet supposes that Aphek was distant from Ziklag more than thirty leagues.

***The Amalekites had invaded*** These were, doubtless, a travelling predatory horde, who, availing themselves of the war between the Philistines and the Israelites, plundered several unprotected towns, and among them Ziklag. It is likely they had not heard of what David did to some of their tribes, else they would have avenged themselves by slaying all they found in Ziklag.

**Verse 4. *Wept, until they had no more power to weep.*** This marks great distress; they wept, as says the Vulgate, till their tears failed them.

**Verse 6. *The people spake of stoning him*** David had done much to civilize those men; but we find by this of what an unruly and ferocious spirit they were; and yet they strongly felt the ties of natural affection, they “grieved every man for his sons and for his daughters.”

***David encouraged himself in the Lord*** He found he could place very little confidence in his men; and, as he was conscious that this evil had not happened either through his neglect or folly, he saw he might the more confidently expect succor from his Maker.

**Verse 7. *Bring me hither the ephod.*** It seems as if David had put on the ephod, and inquired of the Lord for himself; but it is more likely that he caused Abiathar to do it.

**Verse 9. *The brook Besor*** This had its source in the mountain of Idumea, and fell into the Mediterranean Sea beyond Gaza. Some suppose it to have been the same with the river of the wilderness, or the river of Egypt. The sense of this and the following verse is, that when they came to the brook Besor, there were found two hundred out of his six hundred men so spent with fatigue that they could proceed no farther. The baggage or stuff was left there, 1 Samuel 30:24, and they were appointed to guard it.

**Verse 12. *A cake of figs*** See on 1 Samuel 25:18.

**Verse 13. *My master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.*** This was very inhuman: though they had booty enough, and no doubt asses sufficient to carry the invalids, yet they left this poor man to perish; and God visited it upon them, as he made this very person the means of their destruction, by the information which he was enabled to give to David and his men.

**Verse 14. *Upon the south of the Cherethites*** Calmet and others maintain, that the כֶּרֶתִי *kerethi*, which, without the points, might be read Creti, were not only at this time Philistines, but that they were aborigines of Crete, from which they had their name Cherethites or Cretans, and are those of whom Zephaniah speaks, Zephaniah 2:5: Wo to the inhabitants of the sea-coasts, the nation of the Cherethites. And by Ezekiel, Ezekiel 25:16: Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and will cut off the Cherethim. In 2 Samuel 15:18 we find that the Cherethites formed a part of David’s guards.

***South of Caleb*** Somewhere about Kirjath-arba, or Hebron, and Kirjath-sepher; these being in the possession of Caleb and his descendants.

**Verse 15. *Swear unto me*** At the conclusion of this verse, the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic add, that David swore to him. This is not expressed in the Hebrew, but is necessarily implied.

**Verse 16. *Out of the land of the Philistines*** That these Amalekites were enemies to the Philistines is evident, but it certainly does not follow from this that those whom David destroyed were enemies also. This, I think, has been too hastily assumed by Dr. Chandler and others, in order the better to vindicate the character of David.

**Verse 17. *There escaped not a man of them*** It is well known to every careful reader of the Bible, that the Amalekites were a proscribed people, even by God himself, and that in extirpating them it has been supposed David fulfilled the express will of God. But all this depends on whether he had an express commission to do so, received from God himself, as Saul had.

**Verse 20. *And David took all the flocks*** He and his men not only recovered all their own property, but they recovered all the spoil which these Amalekites had taken from the south of Judah, the Cherethites, and the south of Caleb. When this was separated from the rest, it was given to David, and called David's spoil.

**Verse 22. *Men of Belial*** This is a common expression to denote the sour, the rugged, the severe, the idle, and the profane.

**Verse 23. *That which the Lord hath given us*** He very properly attributes this victory to God; the numbers of the Amalekites being so much greater than his own. Indeed, as many fled away on camels as were in the whole host of David.

**Verse 25. *He made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel*** Nothing could be more just and proper than this law: he who stays at home to defend house and property, has an equal right to the booty taken by those who go out to the war. There was a practice of this kind among the Israelites long before this time; see Numbers 31:27; Joshua 22:8; and the note on this latter verse.

**Unto this day.** This is another indication that this book was composed long after the facts it commemorates. See the hypothesis in the preface.

**Verse 26. Unto the elders of Judah** These were the persons among whom he sojourned during his exile, and who had given him shelter and protection. Gratitude required these presents.

**Verse 27. To them which were in Beth-el** This was in the tribe of Ephraim.

**South Ramoth** So called to distinguish it from Ramoth Gilead, beyond Jordan. This Ramoth belonged to the tribe of Simeon, Joshua 19:8.

**In Jattir** Supposed by Calmet to be the same as Ether, Joshua 15:42, but more probably Jattir, Joshua 15:48. It was situated in the mountains, and belonged to Judah.

**Verse 28. In Aroer** Situated beyond Jordan, on the banks of the river Arnon, in the tribe of Gad.

**Siphmoth** Supposed to be the same with Shepham, Numbers 34:10, on the eastern border of the promised land.

**Eshtemoa** Another city in the tribe of Judah. See Joshua 15:50.

**Verse 29. Them which were in Rachal** We know not where this place was; it is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. Calmet conjectures that Hachilah, 1 Samuel 23:19, may be the same place; here we know David did conceal himself for some time, till the Ziphites endeavored to betray him to Saul.

**The cities of the Jerahmeelites** See before, 1 Samuel 27:10.

**And the cities of the Kenites** A very small tract on the southern coast of the Dead Sea.

**Verse 30. Hormah** The general name of those cities which belonged to Arad, king of Canaan; and were devoted to destruction by the Hebrews, and thence called Hormah. See Numbers 21:1-3.

**In Chor-ashan** Probably the same as Ashan in the tribe of Judah: see Joshua 15:42. It was afterwards ceded to Simeon, Joshua 19:7.

***To them which were in Athach*** Probably the same as Ether, Joshua 19:7.

**Verse 31. *To them which were in Hebron*** This was a place strongly attached to David, and David to it, and the place where he was proclaimed king, and where he reigned more than seven years previously to the death of Ishbosheth, Saul's son, who was, for that time, his competitor in the kingdom.

David's having sent presents to all these places, not only shows his sense of gratitude, but that the booty which he took from the Amalekites must have been exceedingly great. And we learn from this also that David sojourned in many places which are not mentioned in the preceding history; for these are all said to be places where David and his men were wont to haunt.

WE are not to suppose that the transactions mentioned here and in the preceding chapter took place after Saul's interview with the woman of En-dor, they were considerably antecedent to this, but how long we do not know. What is recorded in the following chapter must have taken place the next day after Saul left En-dor.

## CHAPTER 31

*A battle in Mount Gilboa between Israel and the Philistines; in which the former are defeated, and Saul's three sons slain, 1, 2. Saul, being mortally wounded, and afraid to fall alive into the hands of the Philistines, desires his armor-bearer to despatch him; which he refusing, Saul falls on his sword, and his armor-bearer does the same, 3, 6. The Israelites on the other side of the valley forsake their cities, and the Philistines come and dwell in them, 7. The Philistines, finding Saul and his three sons among the slain, strip them of their armor, which they put in the house of Ashtaroath, cut off their heads, send the news to all the houses of their idols, and fasten the bodies of Saul and his three sons to the walls of Beth-shan, 8-10. Valiant men of Jabesh-gilead go by night, and take away the bodies; burn them at Jabesh; bury their bones under a tree; and fast seven days, 11-13.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 31

**Verse 1. *Now the Philistines fought*** This is the continuation of the account given in 1 Samuel 29:1-11.

***The men of Israel fled*** It seems as if they were thrown into confusion at the first onset, and turned their backs upon their enemies.

**Verse 2. *Followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons*** They, seeing the discomfiture of their troops, were determined to sell their lives as dear as possible, and therefore maintained the battle till the three brothers were slain.

**Verse 3. *He was sore wounded of the archers.*** It is likely that Saul's sons were slain by the archers, and that Saul was now mortally wounded by the same. Houbigant translates, The archers rushed upon him, from whom he received a grievous wound. He farther remarks that had not Saul been grievously wounded, and beyond hope of recovery, he would not have wished his armor-bearer to despatch him; as he might have continued still to fight, or have made his escape from this most disastrous battle. Some of

the versions render it, He FEARED the archers greatly; but this is by no means likely.

**Verse 4. *Draw thy sword, and thrust me through*** Dr. Delaney has some good observations on this part of the subject: “Saul and his armor-bearer died by the same sword. That his armor-bearer died by his own sword is out of all doubt; the text expressly tells us so; and that Saul perished by the same sword is sufficiently evident. Draw THY sword, says he to him, and thrust me through; which, when he refused, Saul, says the text, took THE sword, **את** (**החרב** eth hachereb, the very sword,) and fell upon it. What sword? Not his own, for then the text would have said so; but, in the plain natural grammatical construction, the sword before mentioned must be the sword now referred to, that is, his armor-bearer’s, 1 Chronicles 10:4, 5. Now it is the established tradition of all the Jewish nation that this armor-bearer was Doeg, and I see no reason why it should be discredited; and if so, then Saul and his executioner both fell by that weapon with which they had before massacred the priests of God. So Brutus and Cassius killed themselves with the same swords with which they stabbed Caesar; and Calippus was stabbed with the same sword with which he stabbed Dio.”

**Verse 6. *And all his men*** Probably meaning those of his troops which were his life or body guards: as to the bulk of the army, it fled at the commencement of the battle, 1 Samuel 31:1.

**Verse 7. *The men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley*** They appear to have been panic-struck, and therefore fled as far as they could out of the reach of the Philistines. As the Philistines possessed Beth-shan, situated near to Jordan, the people on the other side of that river, fearing for their safety, fled also.

**Verse 8. *On the morrow*** It is very likely that the battle and pursuit continued till the night, so that there was no time till the next day to strip and plunder the slain.

**Verse 9. *And they cut off his head*** It is possible that they cut off the heads of his three sons likewise; for although only his head is said to be cut off, and his body only to be fastened to the walls of Beth-shan, yet we



find that the men of Jabesh-gilead found both his body and the bodies of his three sons, fastened to the walls, 1 Samuel 31:12.

Perhaps they only took off Saul's head, which they sent about to their temples as a trophy of their victory, when they sent the news of the defeat of the Israelites through all their coasts, and at last placed it in the temple of Dagon, 1 Chronicles 10:10.

**Verse 10. *They put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth*** As David had done in placing the sword of Goliath in the tabernacle. We have already seen that it was common for the conquerors to consecrate armor and spoils taken in war, to those who were the objects of religious worship.

***They fastened his body to the wall*** Probably by means of iron hooks; but it is said, 2 Samuel 21:12, that these bodies were fastened in the STREET of Beth-shan. This may mean that the place where they were fastened to the wall was the main street or entrance into the city.

**Verse 11. *When the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard*** This act of the men of Jabesh-gilead was an act of gratitude due to Saul, who, at the very commencement of his reign, rescued them from Nahash, king of the Ammonites, (see 1 Samuel 11:1, etc.,) and by his timely succours saved them from the deepest degradation and the most oppressive tyranny. This heroic act, with the seven days' fast, showed that they retained a due sense of their obligation to this unfortunate monarch.

**Verse 12. *And burnt them there.*** It has been denied that the Hebrews burnt the bodies of the dead, but that they buried them in the earth, or embalmed them, and often burnt spices around them, etc. These no doubt were the common forms of sepulture, but neither of these could be conveniently practiced in the present case. They could not have buried them about Beth-shan without being discovered; and as to embalming, that was most likely out of all question, as doubtless the bodies were now too putrid to bear it. They therefore burnt them, because there was no other way of disposing of them at that time so as to do them honor; and the bones and ashes they collected, and buried under a tree or in a grove at Jabesh.

**Verse 13. *And fasted seven days.*** To testify their sincere regret for his unfortunate death, and the public calamity that had fallen upon the land.

THUS ends the troublesome, and I had almost said the useless, reign of Saul. A king was chosen in opposition to the will of the Most High; and the government of God in effect rejected, to make way for this king.

Saul was at first a very humble young man, and conducted himself with great propriety; but his elevation made him proud, and he soon became tyrannical in his private conduct and in his political measures. His natural temper was not good; he was peevish, fretful, and often outrageous; and these bad dispositions, unchecked by proper application to the grace of God, became every day more headstrong and dangerous. Through their violence he seems at times to have been wholly carried away and deranged; and this derangement appears to have been occasionally greatly exacerbated by diabolical influences. This led him to take his friends for his foes; so that in his paroxysms he strove to imbrue his hands in their blood, and more than once attempted to assassinate his own son; and most causelessly and inhumanly ordered the innocent priests of the Lord at Nob to be murdered. This was the worst act in his whole life.

Saul was but ill qualified for a proper discharge of the regal functions. The reader will remember that he was chosen rather as a general of the armies than as civil governor. The administration of the affairs of the state was left chiefly to Samuel, and Saul led forth the armies to battle.

As a general he gave proof of considerable capacity; he was courageous, prompt, decisive, and persevering; and, except in the last unfortunate battle in which he lost his life, generally led his troops to victory.

Saul was a weak man, and very capricious; this is amply proved by his unreasonable jealousy against David, and his continual suspicion that all were leagued against him. It is also evident, in his foolish adjuration relative to the matter of the honey (see 1 Samuel 14:24-30, 38-44) in which, to save his rash and nonsensical oath, he would have sacrificed Jonathan his son!

The question, "Was Saul a good king?" has already in effect been answered. He was on the whole a good man, as far as we know, in private life; but he was a bad king; for he endeavored to reign independently of the Jewish constitution; he in effect assumed the sacerdotal office and functions, and thus even changed what was essential to that constitution.

He not only offered sacrifices which belonged to the priests alone; but in the most positive manner went opposite to the orders of that God whose vicegerent he was.

Of his conduct in visiting the woman at En-dor I have already given my opinion, and to this I must refer. His desperate circumstances imposed on the weakness of his mind; and he did in that instance an act which, in his jurisprudential capacity, he had disapproved by the edict which banished all witches, etc., from Israel. Yet in this act he only wished to avail himself of the counsel and advice of his friend Samuel.

To the question, "Was not Saul a self-murderer?" I scruple not to answer, "No." He was to all appearance mortally wounded, when he begged his armor-bearer to extinguish the remaining spark of life; and he was afraid that the Philistines might abuse his body, if they found him alive; and we can scarcely say how much of indignity is implied in this word; and his falling on his sword was a fit of desperation, which doubtless was the issue of a mind greatly agitated, and full of distraction. A few minutes longer, and his life would in all probability have ebbed out; but though this wound accelerated his death, yet it could not be properly the cause of it, as he was mortally wounded before, and did it on the conviction that he could not survive.

Taking Saul's state and circumstances together, I believe there is not a coroner's inquest in this nation that would not have brought in a verdict of derangement; while the pious and the humane would everywhere have consoled themselves with the hope that God had extended mercy to his soul.

MILLBROOK, JUNE 11, 1818.

Ended this examination August 13, 1827. — A.C.

# INTRODUCTION

**TO THE**

**SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,**

**OTHERWISE CALLED**

**THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS**

As this is a continuation of the preceding history, without any interruption, it can scarcely be called another book. Originally this and the preceding made but one book, and they have been separated without reason or necessity. For a general account of both, see the preface to the first book of Samuel.

It is generally allowed that this book comprehends a period of forty years, from about A.M. 2949 to 2989. See the prefixed chronological account.

It has been divided into three parts: in the first we have an account of the happy commencement of David's reign, 2 Samuel 1-10. In the second, David's unhappy fall, and its miserable consequences, 2 Samuel 11-18. In the third, his restoration to the Divine favor, the re-establishment of his kingdom, and the events which signalized the latter part of his reign, 2 Samuel 19-24.

# THE SECOND BOOK

OF

# SAMUEL

- Year from the Creation, 2949.
- Year before the Incarnation, 1055.
- Year before the first Olympiad, 279.
- Year before the building of Rome, 302.
- Year of the Julian Period, 3659.
- Year of the Dionysian Period, 467.
- Cycle of the Sun, 19.
- Cycle of the Moon, 11.

## CHAPTER 1

*An Amalekite comes to David, and informs him that the Philistines had routed the Israelites; and that Saul and his sons were slain, 1-4. And pretends that he himself had despatched Saul, finding him ready to fall alive into the hands of the Philistines, and had brought his crown and bracelets to David, 5-10. David and his men mourn for Saul and his sons, 11, 12. He orders the Amalekite, who professed that he had killed Saul, to be slain, 13-16. David's funeral song for Saul and Jonathan, 17-27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 2. *A man came out of the camp*** The whole account which this young man gives is a fabrication: in many of the particulars it is grossly self-contradictory. There is no fact in the case but the bringing of the crown, or diadem, and bracelets of Saul; which, as he appears to have been a plunderer of the slain, he found on the field of battle; and he brought them to David, and told the lie of having despatched Saul, merely to ingratiate himself with David.

**Verse 8. *I am an Amalekite.*** Dr. Delaney remarks that an Amalekite took that crown from off the head of Saul, which he had forfeited by his disobedience in the case of Amalek.

**Verse 10. *The crown-and the bracelet*** The crown was probably no more than a royal fillet or diadem, both being the ensigns of royalty. It is sometimes customary in the East for a sovereign prince to give a crown and bracelets, when investing others with dominion or authority over certain provinces. Had Saul these in token of his being God's vicegerent, and that he held the kingdom from him alone?

**Verse 16. *Thy blood be upon thy head*** If he killed Saul, as he said he did, then he deserved death; at that time it was not known to the contrary, and this man was executed on his own confession.

**Verse 17. *David lamented*** See this lamentation, and the notes on it at the end of this chapter. {2 Samuel 1:21}

**Verse 18. *The use of the bow*** The use of is not in the Hebrew; it is simply the bow, that is, a song thus entitled. See the observations at the end. {2 Samuel 1:21}

**Verse 21. *As though he had not been*** In stead of בלי <sup>ל</sup>beli, NOT, I read כלי <sup>ל</sup>keley, INSTRUMENTS.

***Anointed with oil.*** See the observations at the end.

Chap. i. ver. 18, etc.: He bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow, קשת <sup>ל</sup>kasheth.

The word kasheth is to be understood of the title of the song which immediately follows, and not of the use of the bow, as our translation intimates.

Many of David's Psalms have titles prefixed to them; some are termed Shosannim, some Maschil, Nehiloth, Neginoth, etc., and this one here, Kadesh or The Bow, because it was occasioned by the Philistine archers. 1 Samuel 31:3: "And the archers hit him."

But especially respecting the bow of Jonathan, "which returned not back from the blood of the slain," as the song itself expresses. And David could not but remember the bow of Jonathan, out of which "the arrow was shot beyond the lad," 1 Samuel 20:36. It was the time when that covenant was made, and that affection expressed between them "which was greater than the love of women."

On these accounts the song was entitled Kasheth, or The song of the Bow, and David commanded the chief musicians, Ethan, Heman, and Jeduthun, to teach the children of Judah to sing it.

"It is written in the book of Jasher." Sept., ἐπι βιβλίου του ευθους, "in the book of the upright."

ספרא דאוריתא <sup>ל</sup>siphra deoraita, "The book of the Law." -Jonathan.

The Arabic says, "Behold it is written in the book of Ashee; this is the book of Samuel;" the interpretation of which is, "book of songs or canticles."

This lamentation is justly admired as a picture of distress the most tender and the most striking; unequally divided by grief into longer and shorter breaks, as nature could pour them forth from a mind interrupted by the alternate recurrence of the most lively images of love and greatness.

His reverence for Saul and his love for Jonathan have their strongest colourings; but their greatness and bravery come full upon him, and are expressed with peculiar energy.

Being himself a warrior, it is in that character he sees their greatest excellence; and though his imagination hurries from one point of recollection to another, yet we hear him—at first, at last, everywhere—lamenting, How are the mighty fallen!

It is almost impossible to read the noble original without finding every word swollen with a sigh or broken with a sob. A heart pregnant with distress, and striving to utter expressions descriptive of its feelings, which are repeatedly interrupted by an excess of grief, is most sensibly painted throughout the whole. Even an English reader may be convinced of this, from the following specimen in European characters:—

19. Hatstsebi Yishrael al bamotheycha chalal; Eych naphelu gibborim;

20. Al taggidu begath, Al tebasseru bechutsoth Ashkelon; Pen tismachnah benoth Pelishtim, Pen taalozenah benoth haarelim.

21. Harey baggilboa al tal, Veal matar aleychem usedey terumoth; Ki sham nigal magen Gibborim. Magen Shaul keley Mashiach bashshamen!

22. Middam chalalim, mecheleb gibborim, Kesheth Yehonathan lo nashog achor; Vechereb Shaul lo thashub reykam.

23. Shaul Vihonathan, Hannee habim vehanneimim bechaiyeyhem, Ubemotham lo niphradu. Minnesharim kallu, mearayoth gaberu!

24. Benoth Yishrael el Shaul becheynah; Hammalbishchem shani im adanim, Hammaaleh adi zahab al lebushechen.



25. Eych naphelu gibborim bethoch hammilchamah! Yehonathan al bamotheycha chalal!

26. Tsar li aleycha achi Yehonathan, naamta li meod Niphleathah ahabathecha li meahabath nashim!

27. Eych naphelu gibborim, Vaiyobedu keley milchamah!

The three last verses in this sublime lamentation have sense and sound so connected as to strike every reader.

Dr. Kennicott, from whom I have taken several of the preceding remarks, gives a fine Latin version of this song, which I here subjoin:—

*O decus Israelis, super excelsa tua MILES!  
Quomodo ceciderunt FORTES!  
Nolite indicare in Gatho,  
Nolite indicare in plateis Ascalonis:  
Nehemiah laetentur filiae Philistaeorum,  
Nehemiah exultent filiae incircumcisorum.  
Montes Gilboani super vos Nec ros, nec pluvia, neque agri  
primitiarum;*

*Ibi enim abjectus fuit clypeus fortium.  
Clypeus Saulis, arma inuncti olec!  
Sine sanguine MILITUM, Sine adipe FORTIUM.  
Arcus Jonathanis non retrocesserat;  
Gladiusque Saulis non redierat incassum.  
Saul et Jonathan Amabiles erant et jucundi in vitis suis,  
Et in morte sua non separati. Prae aquilis veloces!  
Prae leonibus fortes! Filiae Israelis deflete Saulem;  
Qui coccino cum deliciis vos vestivit,*

*Qui vestibis vestris ornamenta imposuit aurea!  
Quomodo ceciderunt FORTES, in medio belli!  
O Jonathan, super excelsa tua MILES!  
Versor in angustiis, tui causa, Frater mi, Jonathan!  
Mihi fuisti admodum jucundus!  
Mihi tuus amor admodum mirabilis,  
Mulierum exuperans amorem!  
Quomodo ceciderunt fortes,  
Et perierunt arma belli!*

DISSERTATION I., p. 122.

In verse 21 I have inserted כֵּלֵי keley for בְּלֵי beli. Dr. Delaney rightly observes that the particle בְּלֵי beli is not used in any part of the Bible in

the sense of quasi non, as though not, in which sense it must be used here if it be retained as a genuine reading: The shield of Saul as though it had not been anointed with oil.

In a MS. written about the year 1200, numbered 30 in Kennicott's Bible, כלי keley is found; and also in the first edition of the whole Hebrew Bible, printed Soncini 1488. Neither the Syriac nor Arabic versions, nor the Chaldee paraphrase, acknowledge the negative particle בלי beli, which they would have done had it been in the copies from which they translated. It was easy to make the mistake, as there is such a similarity between ב beth and כ caph; the line therefore should be read thus: The shield of Saul, weapons anointed with oil.

In verse 22 נשוג nashog, to obtain, attain, seems to have been written for נסוג nasog, to recede, return. The former destroys the sense, the latter, which our translation has followed, and which is supported by the authority of 30 MSS., makes it not only intelligible but beautiful.

In verses 19, 22, and 25, חלל and חללים chalal and chalalim occur, which we translate the SLAIN, but which Dr. Kennicott, I think from good authority, renders soldier and soldiers; and thus the version is made more consistent and beautiful.

חלל chalal signifies to bore or pierce through; and this epithet might be well given to a soldier, q.d., the PIERCER, because his business is to transfix or pierce his enemies with sword, spear, and arrows.

If it be translated soldiers in the several places of the Old Testament, where we translate it SLAIN or WOUNDED, the sense will be much mended; see Judges 20:31, 39; Psalm 89:11; Proverbs 7:26; Jeremiah 51:4, 47, 49; Ezekiel 11:6, 7; 21:14. In several others it retains its radical signification of piercing, wounding, etc.

AFTER these general observations I leave the particular beauties of this inimitable song to be sought out by the intelligent reader. Much has been written upon this, which cannot, consistently with the plan of these notes, be admitted here. See Delaney, Kennicott, Lowth, etc.; and, above all, let the reader examine the Hebrew text.



## CHAPTER 2

*David, by the direction of God, goes up to Hebron, and is there anointed king over the house of Judah, 1-4. He congratulates the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead on their kindness in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the Philistines, 5-7. Abner anoints Ish-bosheth, Saul's son,*

anointed of God, and as the king of Israel. This brings to my remembrance that fine speech of Saurin, when speaking of the banishment of the Protestants from France by the revocation of the edict of Nantes. He thus at the Hague apostrophizes Louis XIV., their persecutor: Et toi, prince redoutable, que j'honorai jadis comme mon roi, et que je respecte encore comme le fleau do Seigneur. "And thou, O formidable prince, whom I once honored as my king, and whom I still reverence as the scourge of the Lord!"

**Verse 7. *Now let your hands be strengthened*** David certainly wished to attach the men of Jabesh to his interest; he saw that they were generous and valiant, and must be of great service to him whose part they espoused; and he was no doubt afraid that they would attach themselves to the house of Saul, in consideration of the eminent services Saul had rendered them in rescuing them from Nahash, king of the Ammonites.

**Verse 8. *Abner the son of Ner*** This man had long been one of the chief captains of Saul's army, and commander-in-chief on several occasions; he was probably envious of David's power, by whom he had often been out-generalled in the field.

**Verse 9. *Made him king over Gilead*** These were places beyond Jordan; for as the Philistines had lately routed the Israelites, they were no doubt in possession of some of the principal towns, and were now enjoying the fruits of their victory. Abner was therefore afraid to bring the new king to any place where he was likely to meet with much resistance, till he had got his army well recruited.

Who the Ashurites were is not generally agreed; probably men of the tribe of Ashur.

**Verse 10. *Ish-bosheth-reigned two years.*** It is well observed that Ish-bosheth reigned all the time that David reigned in Hebron, which was seven years and six months. Perhaps the meaning of the writer is this: Ish-bosheth reigned two years before any but the tribe of Judah had attached themselves to the interest of David. Some think that Abner in effect reigned the last five years of Ish-bosheth, who had only the name of king after the first two years. Or the text may be understood thus: When Ish-bosheth had reigned two years over Israel, he was forty years of age.

Houbigant, dissatisfied with all the common modes of solution, proposes to read **ששית שנה** shishshith shanah, six years, for the **שתים שנים** shetayim shanim, two years, of the text, which he contends is a solecism; for in pure Hebrew the words would be **שנה שתים** as they are everywhere read in the first book; and **שנה** is the reading of eleven of Kennicott's MSS., and nine of Deuteronomy Rossi's; but the number two is acknowledged by all the ancient versions, and by all the MSS. yet collated. The critical reader may examine Houbigant on the place. After all, probably the expedition mentioned in the succeeding verses is that to which the writer refers, and from which he dates. Ish-bosheth had reigned two years without any rupture with David or his men, till under the direction of Abner, captain of his host, the Israelites passed over Jordan, from Mahanaim to Gibeon, and being opposed by Joab, captain of David's host, that battle took place which is described in the following verses.

**Verse 14. *Let the young men-play before us.*** This was diabolical play, where each man thrust his sword into the body of the other, so that the twenty-four (twelve on each side) fell down dead together! But this was the signal for that sanguinary skirmish which immediately took place.

**Verse 16. *Caught every one his fellow by the head*** Probably by the beard, if these persons were not too young to have one, or by the hair of the head. Alexander ordered all the Macedonians to shave their beards; and being asked by Parmenio why they should do so, answered, "Dost thou not know that in battle there is no better hold than the beard?"

***Helkath-hazzurim*** "The portion of the mighty;" or, "The inheritance of those who were slain," according to the Targum.

**Verse 18. *Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe*** To be swift of foot was deemed a great accomplishment in the heroes of antiquity; **ποδας ωκυς αχιλλευς**, the swift-footed Achilles, is an epithet which Homer gives to that hero no less than thirty times in the course of the Ilias. It has a qualification also among the Roman soldiers; they were taught both to run swiftly, and to swim well.

**Verse 21. *Take thee his armor.*** It seems Asahel wished to get the armor of Abner as a trophy; this also was greatly coveted by ancient heroes. Abner wished to spare him, for fear of exciting Joab's enmity; but as

Asahel was obstinate in the pursuit, and was swifter of foot than Abner, the latter saw that he must either kill or be killed, and therefore he turned his spear and ran it through the body of Asahel. This turning about that he might pierce him is what we translate “the hinder end of his spear.” This slaying of Asahel cost Abner his life, as we shall find in the next chapter.

**Verse 27. *And Joab said*** The meaning of this verse appears to be this: If Abner had not provoked the battle, (see 2 Samuel 2:14,) Joab would not have attacked the Israelites that day; as his orders were probably to act on the defensive. Therefore the blame fell upon Israel.

**Verse 29. *They came to Mahanaim.*** So they returned to the place whence they set out. See 2 Samuel 2:12. This was the commencement of the civil wars between Israel and Judah, and properly the commencement of the division of the two kingdoms, through which both nations were deluged with blood.

## CHAPTER 3

*Account of the children born to David in Hebron, 1-5. Abner being accused by Ish-bosheth of familiarities with Rizpah, Saul's concubine, he is enraged; offers his services to David; goes to Hebron, and makes a league with him, 6-22. Joab, through enmity to Abner, pretends to David that he came as a spy, and should not be permitted to return, 23-25. He follows Abner, and treacherously slays him, 26, 27. David hearing of it is greatly incensed against Joab, and pronounces a curse upon him and upon his family, 28, 29. He commands a general mourning for Abner, and himself follows the bier weeping, 30-32. David's lamentation over Abner, 33, 34. The people solicit David to take meat; but he fasts the whole day, and complains to them of the insolence and intrigues of Joab and his brothers: the people are pleased with his conduct, 35-39.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *There was long war*** Frequent battles and skirmishes took place between the followers of David and the followers of Ish-bosheth, after the two years mentioned above, to the end of the fifth year, in which Ish-bosheth was slain by Rechab and Baanah.

**Verse 6. *Abner made himself strong*** This strengthening of himself, and going in to the late king's concubine, were most evident proofs that he wished to seize upon the government. See 1 Kings 2:21, 22; 12:8; 16:21.

**Verse 8. *Amos I a dog's head*** Dost thou treat a man with indignity who has been the only prop of thy tottering kingdom, and the only person who could make head against the house of David?

**Verse 9. *Except, as the Lord hath sworn to David*** And why did he not do this before, when he knew that God had given the kingdom to David? Was he not now, according to his own concession, fighting against God?

**Verse 11. *He could not answer Abner a word*** Miserable is the lot of a king who is governed by the general of his army, who may strip him of his



power and dignity whenever he pleases! Witness the fate of poor Charles I. of England and Louis XVI. of France. Military men, above all others, should never be intrusted with any civil power, and should be great only in the field.

**Verse 13. *Except thou first bring Michal*** David had already six wives at Hebron; and none of them could have such pretensions to legitimacy as Michal, who had been taken away from him and married to Phaltiel. However distressing it was to take her from a husband who loved her most tenderly, (see 2 Samuel 3:16.) yet prudence and policy required that he should strengthen his own interest in the kingdom as much as possible; and that he should not leave a princess in the possession of a man who might, in her right, have made pretensions to the throne. Besides, she was his own lawful wife, and he had a right to demand her when he pleased.

**Verse 14. *Deliver me my wife*** It is supposed that he meant to screen Abner; and to prevent that violence which he might have used in carrying off Michal.

**Verse 16. *Weeping behind her*** If genuine affection did not still subsist between David and Michal, it was a pity to have taken her from Phaltiel, who had her to wife from the conjoint authority of her father and her king. Nevertheless David had a legal right to her, as she had never been divorced, for she was taken from him by the hand of violence.

**Verse 18. *The Lord hath spoken of David*** Where is this spoken? Such a promise is not extant. Perhaps it means no more than, "Thus, it may be presumed, God hath determined."

**Verse 21. *He went in peace.*** David dismissed him in good faith, having no sinister design in reference to him.

**Verse 27. *And smote him there*** Joab feared that, after having rendered such essential services to David, Abner would be made captain of the host: he therefore determined to prevent it by murdering the man, under pretense of avenging the death of his brother Asahel.

The murder, however, was one of the most unprovoked and wicked: and such was the power and influence of this nefarious general, that the king dared not to bring him to justice for his crime. In the same way he

murdered Amasa, a little time afterwards. See 2 Samuel 20:10. Joab was a cool-blooded, finished murderer. “Treason and murder ever keep together, like two yoke-devils.”

**Verse 29. *Let it rest on the head*** All these verbs may be rendered in the future tense: it will rest on the head of Joab, etc. This was a prophetic declaration, which sufficiently showed the displeasure of God against this execrable man.

**Verse 31. *David said to Joab*** He commanded him to take on him the part of a principal mourner.

**Verse 33. *The king lamented over Abner*** This lamentation, though short, is very pathetic. It is a high strain of poetry; but the measure cannot be easily ascertained. Our own translation may be measured thus:—

*Died Abner as a fool dieth?  
Thy hands were not bound,  
Nor thy feet put into fetters.  
As a man falleth before the wicked.  
So hast thou fallen!*

Or thus:—

*Shall Abner die A death like to a villain's?  
Thy hands not bound,  
Nor were the fetters to thy feet applied.  
Like as one falls before the sons of guilt,  
So hast thou fallen!*

He was not taken away by the hand of justice, nor in battle, nor by accident: he died the death of a culprit by falling into the hands of a villain.

This song was a heavy reproof to Joab; and must have galled him extremely, being sung by all the people.

**Verse 36. *The people took notice*** They saw that the king's grief was sincere, and that he had no part nor device in the murder of Abner: see 2 Samuel 3:37.

**Verse 39. *I am this day weak*** Had Abner lived, all the tribes of Israel would have been brought under my government.

***Though anointed king*** I have little else than the title: first, having only one tribe under my government; and secondly, the sons of Zeruah, Joab and his brethren, having usurped all the power, and reduced me to the shadow of royalty.

***The Lord shall reward the doer of evil*** That is, Joab, whom he appears afraid to name.

WE talk much of ancient manners, their simplicity and ingenuousness; and say that the former days were better than these. But who says this who is a judge of the times? In those days of celebrated simplicity, etc., there were not so many crimes as at present I grant: but what they wanted in number they made up in degree: deceit, cruelty, rapine, murder, and wrong of almost every kind, then flourished. We are refined in our vices; they were gross and barbarous in theirs: they had neither so many ways nor so many means of sinning; but the sum of their moral turpitude was greater than ours. We have a sort of decency and good breeding, which lay a certain restraint on our passions, they were boorish and beastly, and their bad passions were ever in full play. Civilization prevents barbarity and atrocity; mental cultivation induces decency of manners: those primitive times were generally without these. Who that knows them would wish such ages to return?

## CHAPTER 4

*Some account of Rechab and Baanah, two of Ish-bosheth's captains, and of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, 1-4. Rechab and Baanah murder Ish-bosheth, and escape; and bring his head to David, 5-8. David is greatly irritated, and commands them to be slain, 9-12.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1. *All the Israelites were troubled*** Abner was their great support; and on him they depended; for it appears that Ish-bosheth was a feeble prince, and had few of those qualities requisite for a sovereign.

**Verse 2. *Captains of bands*** Principes latronum, captains of banditti, says the Vulgate; the Syriac is the same. Whether Ish-bosheth kept bands of marauders, whose business it was to make sudden incursions into the country places, and carry off grain, provisions, cattle, etc., we know not; but such persons would be well qualified for the bloody work in which these two men were afterwards employed.

**Verse 3. *The Beerothites fled to Gittaim*** Probably the same as Gath; as Ramathaim is the same as Ramah.

**Verse 4. *He fell, and became lame*** Dislocated his ankle, knee, or thigh; which was never after reduced; and thus he became lame. Lovely Jonathan! unfortunate in thy life, and in thy progeny.

**Verse 5. *Lay on a bed at noon***. It is a custom in all hot countries to travel or work very early and very late, and rest at noonday, in which the heat chiefly prevails.

**Verse 6. *As though they would have fetched wheat*** The king's stores were probably near his own dwelling; and these men were accustomed to go thither for provisions for themselves, their cattle, and their men. This supposition which is natural, renders unnecessary all the emendations of Houbigant and others.

As these men were accustomed to bring wheat from these stores, from which it appears there was an easy passage to the king's chamber, (especially if we consider this a summer-house, as it most probably was,) no man would suspect their present errand, as they were in the habit of going frequently to that place.

**Verse 8. *They brought the head-unto David*** They thought, as did the poor lying Amalekite, to ingratiate themselves with David by this abominable act.

**Verse 9. *Who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity*** This was, in David's case, a very proper view of the goodness and watchful providence of God towards him. His life was frequently in danger; murderers had often laid wait for it: but God, the living God, had always redeemed that life from all adversity; and called on him now to punish such evil-minded and blood-thirsty men.

**Verse 10. *A reward for his tidings*** ὦ εδει με δουναι ευαγγελια, Septuagint. Here is a proof that ευαγγελιον, evangelium or gospel, signifies the reward which the bringer of good tidings is entitled to receive. See my preface to St. Matthew's Gospel. {Matthew 1:1 }

**Verse 11. *How much more*** Here are several things which aggravated the guilt of those wicked men. 1. Ish-bosheth was an innocent man, and therefore none could have any ground of quarrel against him. 2. He was in his own house, which was his sanctuary, and none but the worst of men would disturb him there. 3. He was upon his bed, resting in the heat of the day, and so free from suspicion that he was not even attended by his guards, nor had he his doors secured. To take away the life of such a man, in such circumstances, whom also they professed to hold as their sovereign, was the most abandoned treachery.

**Verse 12. *And they slew them*** None ever more richly deserved death; and by this act of justice, David showed to all Israel that he was a decided enemy to the destruction of Saul's family; and that none could lift up their hands against any of them without meeting with condign punishment. In all these cases I know not that it was possible for David to show more sincerity, or a stricter regard for justice.

## CHAPTER 5

*The elders of ad the tribes of Israel come and anoint David king over all Israel, 1-5. He goes against the Jebusites, and takes the strong hold of Zion, and afterwards the city itself; which is called the city of David, 6-9. David's prosperity, and friendship with Hiram, king of Tyre, 10-12. He takes more concubines, and begets several sons and daughters, 13-16. The Philistines gather together against him in the valley of Rephaim; he defeats them; they abandon their idols, and David and his men burn them, 17-21. They assemble once more in the valley of Rephaim, and David smites them from Geba to Gazer, 22-25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *Then came all the tribes of Israel*** Ish-bosheth the king, and Abner the general, being dead, they had no hope of maintaining a separate kingdom, and therefore thought it better to submit to David's authority. And they founded their resolution on three good arguments: 1. David was their own countryman; We are thy bone and thy flesh. 2. Even in Saul's time David had been their general, and had always led them to victory; Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel. 3. God had appointed him to the kingdom, to govern and protect the people; The Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people and be a captain over Israel.

**Verse 3. *They anointed David king*** This was the third time that David was anointed, having now taken possession of the whole kingdom.

**Verse 6. *The king and his men went to Jerusalem*** This city was now in the hands of the Jebusites; but how they got possession of it is not known, probably they took it during the wars between Ish-bosheth and David. After Joshua's death, what is called the lower city was taken by the Israelites; and it is evident that the whole city was in their possession in the time of Saul, for David brought the head of Goliath thither, 1 Samuel 17:54. It appears to have been a very strong fortress, and, from what follows, deemed impregnable by the Jebusites. It was right that the

Israelites should repossess it; and David very properly began his reign over the whole country by the siege of this city.

*Except thou take away the blind and the lame* Scarcely a passage in the sacred oracles has puzzled commentators more than this. For my own part, I do not think that it is worth the labor spent upon it, nor shall I encumber these pages with the discordant opinions of learned men. From the general face of the text it appears that the Jebusites, vainly confiding in the strength of their fortress, placed lame and blind men upon the walls, and thus endeavored to turn into ridicule David's attempt to take the place: Thou shalt not come in hither, except thou take away the blind and the lame; nothing could be more cutting to a warrior.

Dr. Kennicott has taken great pains to correct this passage, as may be seen in his First Dissertation on the Hebrew Text, pages 27 to 47. I shall insert our present version with his amended text line for line, his translation being distinguished by italics; and for farther information refer to Dr. K.'s work.

**Ver. 6.** And the king and his men went to

K. And the king and his men went to

Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants

K. Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of

the land: who spake unto David, saying,

K. the land; who spake unto David, saying;

Except thou take away the blind and the

K. Thou shalt not come in hither; for the blind

lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking,

K. and the lame shall drive thee away by saying,

David cannot come in hither.

K. "David shall not come in hither."

**Ver. 8.** And David said-Whosoever getteth

K. And David said-Whosoever smiteth the

up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites,

K. Jebusites, and through the subterranean passage

and the lame and the blind, that are hated

K. reacheth the lame and the blind who

of David's soul-Wherefore they said, The

K. hate the life of David (because the blind and

blind and the lame shall not come into the

K. the lame said, "He shall not come into the house.

K. house,") shall be chief and captain. So

K. Joab the son of Zeruah went up first, and

K. was chief.

**Verse 11. *Hiram king of Tyre*** He was a very friendly man, and no doubt a believer in the true God. He was not only a friend to David, but also of his son Solomon, to whom, in building the temple, he afforded the most important assistance.

**Verse 13. *David took him more concubines*** He had, in all conscience, enough before; he had, in the whole, eight wives and ten concubines. That dispensation permitted polygamy, but from the beginning it was not so; and as upon an average there are about fourteen males born to thirteen females, polygamy is unnatural, and could never have entered into the original design of God.

**Verse 14. *These be the names*** Eleven children are here enumerated in the Hebrew text; but the Septuagint has no less than twenty-four. I shall insert their names, and the reader if he please may collate them with the text: Sammus, Sobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ebear, Elisue, Naphek, Jephies, Elisama, Elidae, Eliphath, Samae, Jessibath, Nathan, Galimaan, Jebaar, Theesus, Eliphath, Naged, Naphek, Jonathan, Leasamus, Baalimath, and Eliphaath. There is no doubt some corruption in these names; there are two of the name of Nathan, two of Eliphath, and two of Naphek; and probably Sammus and Samae are the same.

**Verse 17. *The Philistines came up to seek David*** Ever since the defeat of the Israelites and the fall of Saul and his sons, the Philistines seem to have been in undisturbed possession of the principal places in the land of Israel; now, finding that David was chosen king by the whole nation, they



thought best to attack him before his army got too numerous, and the affairs of the kingdom were properly settled.

**Verse 19. *David inquired of the Lord*** He considered himself only the captain of the Lord's host, and therefore would not strike a stroke without the command of his Superior.

**Verse 20. *The Lord hath broken forth*** He very properly attributes the victory of Jehovah, without whose strength and counsel he could have done nothing.

***Baal-perazim*** The plain or chief of breaches, because of the breach which God made in the Philistine army; and thus he commemorated the interference of the Lord.

**Verse 21. *They left their images*** It was the custom of most nations to carry their gods with them to battle: in imitation of this custom the Israelites once took the ark and lost it in the field; see 1 Samuel 4:10, 11.

**Verse 23. *Fetch a compass behind them*** When they may be had, God will not work without using human means. By this he taught David caution, prudence, and dependence on the Divine strength.

**Verse 24. *When thou hearest the sound of a going*** If there had not been an evident supernatural interference, David might have thought that the sleight or ruse de guerre which he had used was the cause of his victory. By the going in the tops of the mulberry trees probably only a rustling among the leaves is intended. The Targum says, a noise; the Arabic has it, the noise of horses' hoofs.

**Verse 25. *And David did so*** He punctually obeyed the directions of the Lord, and then every thing succeeded to his wish.

How is it that such supernatural directions and assistances are not communicated now? Because they are not asked for; and they are not asked for because they are not expected; and they are not expected because men have not faith; and they have not faith because they are under a refined spirit of atheism, and have no spiritual intercourse with their Maker. Who believes that God sees all things and is everywhere? Who supposes that he concerns himself with the affairs of his creatures? Who acknowledges him in all his ways? Who puts not his own wisdom,

prudence, and strength, in the place of God Almighty? Reader, hast thou faith in God? Then exercise it, cultivate it, and thou mayest remove mountains.

It is worthy of remark that David was, by the appointment of God, to feed the people. As he had formerly the care of a flock of sheep, which he was to watch over, defend, lead in and out, and for which he was to find pasture; now he is to watch over, defend, lead in and out, feed, and protect, the Israelites. He is to be the shepherd of the people, not the tyrant or oppressor.

In ancient times, among the Greeks, kings were denominated **ποιμενες λαου**, shepherds of the people; and all good kings were really such: but, in process of time, this pleasing title was changed for **βασιλευς** and **τυραννος**, sovereign and tyrant; in neither of which names does any thing of the original title exist. And such are the different political constitutions of the kingdoms of the earth, that it is impossible that in any of them, the British excepted, the king can be the shepherd and father of his people. All the other regal constitutions under the sun permit the sovereign to be despotic, and consequently oppressive and tyrannical if he please. The British alone gives no power of this kind to the prince; by the constitution he is a patriotic king, and by the influence of those maxims of state which are continually presented to his view, and according to which all acts of government are formed, he becomes habitually the father of his people, and in this light alone do the British people behold the British king.

David, by his own authority, without any form of law, could slay the Amalekite who said he had killed Saul; and could cut off the heads of Rechab and Baanah, who murdered Ish-bosheth; but, in the government of Britain, the culprit is to be heard in his vindication, witnesses are to be examined, the facts viewed by an upright judge in the light of the law; and then the alleged criminality is left to the decision of twelve honest men, the equals of the accused, who are bound by a solemn oath to decide according to the evidence brought before them. The Israelitish constitution was radically good, but the British constitution is much better. In the former, while the king ruled according to the spirit of the constitution, he could do no wrong, because he was only the vicegerent of the Almighty; in the latter, the king can do no wrong, because he is bound both by the spirit and

letter of the law, to do nothing but what is according to the rules of eternal justice and equity laid down in that law; nothing is left to mere regal power or authority, and nothing trusted to human fickleness or caprice. In all his acts he is directed by his nobles and commons; who, being the representatives of all classes of the people, are always supposed to speak their mind. Well may it be said, Blessed are the people who are in such a case!

## CHAPTER 6

*David goes with thirty thousand men to bring the ark from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem, 1-5. The ox stumbling, Uzzah, who drove the cart on which the ark was placed, put forth his hand to save it from falling: the Lord was displeased, and smote him so that he died, 6, 7. David, being alarmed, carries the ark to the house of Obed-edom, 8-10. Here it remained three months; and God prospered Obed-edom, in whose house it was deposited, 11. David, hearing of this, brings the ark, with sacrifices and solemn rejoicings, to Jerusalem, 12-15. Michal, seeing David dance before the ark, despises him, 16. He offers burnt-offerings and peace offerings, and deals among all the people, men and women, a cake of bread, a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine each, 17-19. Michal coming to meet him, and seeing him dance extravagantly before the ark, reproaches him for his conduct: he vindicates himself, reproves her, and she dies childless, 20-23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1. *Thirty thousand.*** This is supposed to have been a new levy; and thus he augmented his army by 30, 000 fresh troops. The Septuagint has 70, 000.

**Verse 2. *From Baale of Judah*** This is supposed to be the same city which, in Joshua 15:60, is called Kirjah-baal or Kirjath-jearim; (see 1 Chronicles 13:6;) or Baalah, Joshua 15:9.

***Whose name is called by the name of the Lord*** That is, The ark is called the ark of the Lord of hosts. But this is not a literal version; the word שֵׁם ש ש shem, NAME, occurs twice together; probably one of them should be read שָׁם ש ש sham, THERE. There the name of the Lord of hosts was invoked, etc.

**Verse 3. *A new cart*** Every thing used in the worship of God was hallowed or set apart for that purpose: a new cart was used through respect, as that had never been applied to any profane or common purpose. But this was not sufficient, for the ark should have been carried

on the shoulders of the priests; and the neglect of this ceremony was the cause of the death of Uzzah.

**Verse 5. *On all manner of instruments made of fir wood*** This place should be corrected from the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 13:8: “All Israel played before God, with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries,” etc. Instead of **בְּכֹל עֵצִי** bechol atsey, “with all woods” or “trees;” the parallel place is **בְּכֹל עֹז** bechol oz. “with all their strength:” this makes a good sense, the first makes none. The Septuagint, in this place, has the verse reading; **εὐ τολχοι**, with might.

**Verse 6. *Uzzah put forth his hand*** In Numbers 4:15-20, the Levites are forbidden to touch the ark on pain of death, this penalty was inflicted upon Uzzah, and he was the first that suffered for a breach Of this law.

**Verse 7. *Smote him there for his error*** Uzzah sinned through ignorance and precipitancy; he had not time to reflect, the oxen suddenly stumbled; and, fearing lest the ark should fall, he suddenly stretched out his hand to prevent it. Had he touched the ark with impunity, the populace might have lost their respect for it and its sacred service, the example of Uzzah must have filled them with fear and sacred reverence; and, as to Uzzah, no man can doubt of his eternal safety. He committed a sin unto death, but doubtless the mercy of God was extended to his soul.

**Verse 10. *But David carried it aside*** The house of Obed-edom appears to have been very near the city, which they were about to enter, but were prevented by this accident, and lodged the ark with the nearest friend.

**Verse 11. *The Lord blessed Obed-edom*** And why? Because he had the ark of the Lord in his house. Whoever entertains God’s messengers, or consecrates his house to the service of God, will infallibly receive God’s blessing.

**Verse 12. *So David-brought up the ark*** The Vulgate adds to this verse: And David had seven choirs, and a calf for a sacrifice. The Septuagint make a greater addition: “And he had seven choirs carrying the ark, a sacrifice, a calf, and lambs. And David played on harmonious organs before the Lord; and David was clothed with a costly tunic; and David and all the house of Israel, brought the ark of the Lord with rejoicing, and the sound of a

trumpet.” Nothing of this is found in any MS., nor in the Chaldee, the Syriac, nor the Arabic, nor in the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 15:25.

**Verse 14. *And David danced before the Lord*** Dancing is a religious ceremony among the Hindoos, and they consider it an act of devotion to their idols. It is evident that David considered it in the same light. What connection dancing can have with devotion I cannot tell. This I know, that unpremeditated and involuntary skipping may be the effect of sudden mental elation.

**Verse 16. *She despised him in her heart.*** She did not blame him outwardly; she thought he had disgraced himself, but she kept her mind to herself.

**Verse 18. *He blessed the people in the name of the Lord*** David acted here as priest, for it was the general prerogative of the priests to bless the people, but it appears, by both David and Solomon, that it was the prerogative of the kings also.

**Verse 19. *A cake of bread*** Such as those which are baked without leaven, and are made very thin.

***A good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.*** The words of flesh and of wine we add; they are not in the Hebrew. The Chaldee translates one part and one portion; but all the other versions understand the Hebrew as we do.

**Verse 20. *To bless his household.*** This was according to the custom of the patriarchs, who were priests in their own families. It is worthy of remark, that David is called patriarch by Stephen, Acts 2:29, though living upwards of four hundred years after the termination of the patriarchal age.

***How glorious was the king of Israel*** This is a strong irony. From what Michal says, it is probable that David used some violent gesticulations, by means of which some parts of his body became uncovered. But it is very probable that we cannot guess all that was implied in this reproach.

**Verse 21. *It was before the Lord, which chose me*** David felt the reproach, and was strongly irritated, and seems to have spoken to Michal with sufficient asperity.

**Verse 22. *I will yet be more vile*** The plain meaning of these words appears to be this: “I am not ashamed of humbling myself before that God who rejected thy father because of his obstinacy and pride, and chose me in his stead to rule his people; and even those maid-servants, when they come to know the motive of my conduct, shall acknowledge its propriety, and treat me with additional respect; and as for thee, thou shalt find that thy conduct is as little pleasing to God as it is to me.” Then it is said, Michal had no child till the day of her death: probably David never more took her to his bed; or God, in his providence, might have subjected her to barrenness which in Palestine was considered both a misfortune and a reproach. Michal formed her judgment without reason, and meddled with that which she did not understand. We should be careful how we attribute actions, the reasons of which we cannot comprehend, to motives which may appear to us unjustifiable or absurd. Rash judgments are doubly pernicious; they hurt those who form them, and those of whom they are formed.

## CHAPTER 7

*David consults the prophet Nathan about building a temple for the Lord, and is encouraged by him to do it, 1-3. That night Nathan receives a revelation from God, stating that Solomon, not David, should build the temple, 4-16. Nathan delivers the Divine message, and David magnifies God for his mercies, and makes prayer and supplication, 17-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1.** *When the king sat in his house* That is, when he became resident in the palace which Hiram, king of Tyre, had built for him.

*And the Lord had given him rest* This was after he had defeated the Philistines, and cast them out of all the strong places in Israel which they had possessed after the overthrow of Saul; but before he had carried his arms beyond the land of Israel, against the Moabites, Syrians, and Idumeans. See 2 Samuel 8:1-14.

**Verse 2.** *I dwell in a house of cedar* That is, a house whose principal beams, ceiling, and wainscot, were cedar.

*Dwelleth within curtains.* Having no other residence but the tabernacle, which was a place covered with the skins of beasts, Exodus 26:14.

**Verse 3.** *Nathan said to the king* In this case he gave his judgment as a pious and prudent man, not as a prophet; for the prophets were not always under a Divine afflatus; it was only at select times they were thus honored.

*For the Lord is with thee.* Thou hast his blessing in all that thou doest, and this pious design of thine will most certainly meet with his approbation.

**Verse 5.** *Shalt thou build me a house* That is, Thou shalt not: this is the force of the interrogative in such a case.



**Verse 7. *With any of the tribes*** “Spake I a word to any of the JUDGES” is the reading in the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 17:6, and this is probably the true reading. Indeed, there is but one letter of difference between them, and letters which might be easily mistaken for each other: שִׁבְטֵי shibtey, tribes, is almost the same in appearance with שׁוֹפְטֵי shophetey, judges; the בּ beth and the פּ pe being the same letter, the apex under the upper stroke of the פּ pe excepted. If this were but a little effaced in a MS., it would be mistaken for the other, and then we should have tribes instead of judges. This reading seems confirmed by 2 Samuel 7:11.

**Verse 10. *I will appoint a place*** I have appointed a place, and have planted them. See the observations at the end. {2 Samuel 7:25}

**Verse 11. *The Lord-will make thee a house.*** Thou hast in thy heart to make me a house; I have it in my heart to make thee a house: thy family shall be built up, and shall prosper in the throne of Israel; and thy spiritual posterity shall remain for ever. God is the author of all our holy purposes, as well as of our good works, he first excites them; and if we be workers together with him, he will crown and reward them as though they were our own, though he is their sole author.

**Verse 13. *He shall build*** That is, Solomon shall build my temple, not thou, because thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars. See 1 Chronicles 22:8; and see also the observations at the end. {2 Samuel 7:25}

***The throne of his kingdom for ever.*** This is a reference to the government of the spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of the Messiah, agreeably to the predictions of the prophet long after, and by which this passage is illustrated: “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even FOR EVER.” Isaiah 9:7.

**Verse 14. *If he commit iniquity*** Depart from the holy commandment delivered to him; I will chasten him with the rod of men-he shall have affliction, but his government shall not be utterly subverted. But this has a higher meaning. See the observations at the end. {2 Samuel 7:25}

**Verse 15. *But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul*** His house shall be a lasting house, and he shall die in the throne of Israel, his children succeeding him; and the spiritual seed, Christ, possessing and ruling in that throne to the end of time.

The family of Saul became totally extinct; the family of David remained till the incarnation. Joseph and Mary were both of that family; Jesus was the only heir to the kingdom of Israel; he did not choose to sit on the secular throne, he ascended the spiritual throne, and now he is exalted to the right hand of God, a PRINCE and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins. See the observations at the end of the chapter.

Many have applied these verses and their parallels to support the doctrine of unconditional final perseverance; but with it the text has nothing to do; and were we to press it, because of the antitype, Solomon, the doctrine would most evidently be ruined, for there is neither proof nor evidence of Solomon's salvation.

**Verse 18. *Sat before the Lord*** Sometimes, when a Hindoo seeks a favor from a superior, he sits down in his presence in silence; or if he solicits some favor of a god, as riches, children, etc., he places himself before the idol, and remains in a waiting posture, or repeats the name of the god, counting the beads in his necklace. — WARD.

**Verse 19. *And is this the manner of man*** Literally: And this, O Lord God, is the law of Adam. Does he refer to the promise made to Adam, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent? From my line shall the Messiah spring, and be the spiritual and triumphant King, for ever and ever. See the additions at the end.

**Verse 20. *What can David say more*** How can I express my endless obligation to thee?

**Verse 25. *And do as thou hast said.*** David well knew that all the promises made to himself and family were conditional; and therefore he prays that they may be fulfilled. His posterity did not walk with God, and therefore they were driven from the throne. It was taken from them by the neighboring nations, and it is now in the hands of the Mohammedans; all the promises have failed to David and his natural posterity, and to Christ and his spiritual seed alone are they fulfilled. Had David's posterity been

faithful, they would, according to the promises of God, have been sitting on the Israelitish throne at this day.

It is worthy of remark how seldom God employs a soldier in any spiritual work, just for the same reason as that given to David; and yet there have been several eminently pious men in the army, who have labored for the conversion of sinners. I knew a remarkable instance of this; I was acquainted with Mr. John Haime, a well known preacher among the people called Methodists. He was a soldier in the queen's eighth regiment of dragoons, in Flanders, in the years 1739-46. He had his horse shot under him at the battle of Fontenoy, May 11, 1745; and was in the hottest fire of the enemy for above seven hours; he preached among his fellow soldiers frequently, and under the immediate patronage of his royal highness the Duke of Cumberland, commander-in-chief; and was the means of reforming and converting many hundreds of the soldiers. He was a man of amazing courage and resolution, and of inflexible loyalty. One having expressed a wonder "how he could reconcile killing men with preaching the Gospel of the grace and peace of Christ," he answered, "I never killed a man." "How can you tell that? were you not in several battles?" "Yes, but I am confident I never killed nor wounded a man." "How was this? did you not do your duty?" "Yes, with all my might; but when in battle, either my horse jumped aside or was wounded, or was killed, or my carbine missed fire, and I could never draw the blood of the enemy." "And would you have done it if you could?" "Yes, I would have slain the whole French army, had it been in my power; I fought in a good cause, for a good king, and for my country; and though I struck in order to cut, and hack, and hew, on every side, I could kill no man." This is the substance of his answers to the above questions, and we see from it a remarkable interfering Providence; God had appointed this man to build a spiritual house in the British army, in Flanders, and would not permit him to shed the blood of his fellow creatures.

"This chapter is one of the most important in the Old Testament, and yet some of its most interesting verses are very improperly rendered in our translation; it therefore demands our most careful consideration. And as in the course of these remarks I propose to consider, and hope to explain, some of the prophecies descriptive of THE MESSIAH, which were fulfilled in JESUS CHRIST, among which prophecies that contained in this chapter is

worthy of particular attention, I shall introduce it with a general state of this great argument.

“It having pleased God that, between the time of a Messiah being promised and the time of his coming, there should be delivered by the prophets a variety of marks by which the Messiah was to be known, and distinguished from every other man; it was impossible for any one to prove himself the Messiah, whose character did not answer to these marks; and of course it was necessary that all these criteria, thus Divinely foretold, should be fulfilled in the character of Jesus Christ. That these prophetic descriptions of the Messiah were numerous, appears from Christ and his apostles, (Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 17:2, 3; 28:23, etc.,) who referred the Jews to the Old Testament as containing abundant evidence of his being THE MESSIAH, because he fulfilled all the prophecies descriptive of that singular character. The chief of these prophecies related to his being miraculously born of a virgin; the time and place of his birth; the tribe and family from which he was to descend; the miracles he was to perform; the manner of his preaching; his humility and mean appearance; the perfect innocence of his life; the greatness of his sufferings; the treachery of his betrayer; the circumstances of his trial; the nature of his death and burial; and his miraculous resurrection. Now amongst all the circumstances which form this chain of prophecy, the first reference made in the New Testament relates to his descent; for the New Testament begins with asserting that JESUS CHRIST was the son of David, the son of Abraham. As to the descent of Christ from ABRAHAM, every one knows that Christ was born a Jew, and consequently descended from Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. And we all know that the promise given to Abraham concerning the Messiah is recorded in the history of Abraham’s life, in Genesis 22:18. Christ being also to descend from DAVID, there can be no doubt that this promise, as made to David, was recorded likewise in the history of David. It is remarkable that David’s life is given more at large than that of any other person in the Old Testament; and can it be supposed that the historian omitted to record that promise which was more honorable to David than any other circumstance? The record of this promise, if written at all, must have been written in this chapter; in the message from God by Nathan to David, which is here inserted. Here, I am fully persuaded, the promise was, and still is, recorded; and the chief reason why our divines

have so frequently missed it, or been so much perplexed about it, is owing to our very improper translation of the 10th and 14th verses. {2 Samuel 7:10, 14}

“This wrong translation in a part of Scripture so very interesting, has been artfully laid hold of, and expatiated upon splendidly, by the deistical author of *The Ground and Reasons of the Christian Religion*; who pretends to demonstrate that the promise of a Messiah could not be here recorded. His reasons, hitherto I believe unanswered, are three: 1. Because, in 2 Samuel 7:10, the prophet speaks of the future prosperity of the Jews, as to be afterwards fixed, and no more afflicted; which circumstances are totally repugnant to the fate of the Jews, as connected with the birth and death of Christ. 2. Because the son here promised was (2 Samuel 7:13) to build a house; which house, it is pretended, must mean the temple of Solomon; and of course Solomon must be the son here promised. And, 3. Because 2 Samuel 7:14 supposes that this son might commit iniquity, which could not be supposed of the Messiah. The first of these objections is founded on our wrong translation of 2 Samuel 7:10, where the words should be expressed as relating to the time past or present. For the prophet is there declaring what great things God had already done for David and his people; that he had raised David from the sheepfold to the throne; and that he had planted the Israelites in a place of safety, at rest from all those enemies who had so often before afflicted them. That the verbs **ושמתי** vesamti, and **ונטעתי** unetati, may be rendered in the time past or present, is allowed by our own translators; who here (2 Samuel 7:11) render **והניחותי** vahanichothi, and have caused thee to rest, and also render **והגיד** vehiggid, and telleth; which construction, made necessary here by the context, might be confirmed by other proofs almost innumerable. The translation, therefore, should run thus: I took thee from the sheepcote; and have made thee a great name; and I HAVE APPOINTED a place for my people Israel; and HAVE PLANTED them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more. Neither DO the children of wickedness afflict them any more; as before-time, and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over Israel: and I HAVE CAUSED thee to rest from all thine enemies.

“Objection the second is founded on a mistake in the sense. David indeed had proposed to build a house for God, which God did not permit. Yet, approving the piety of David’s intention, God was pleased to reward it by promising that he would make a house for DAVID; which house, to be thus erected by God, was certainly not material, or made of stones, but a spiritual house, or family, to be raised up for the honor of God, and the salvation of mankind. And this house, which God would make, was to be built by David’s SEED; and this seed was to be raised up AFTER David slept with his fathers; which words clearly exclude Solomon, who was set up and placed upon the throne BEFORE David was dead. This building promised by God, was to be erected by one of David’s descendants, who was also to be an everlasting king; and indeed the house and the kingdom were both of them to be established forever. Now that this house or spiritual building was to be set up, together with a kingdom, by the Messiah, is clear from Zechariah; who very emphatically says, (Zechariah 6:12, 13,) Behold the man whose name is The Branch; HE SHALL BUILD THE TEMPLE of the Lord. Even HE SHALL BUILD THE TEMPLE of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his THRONE, etc. Observe also the language of the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 3:9-17, St. Paul says, Ye are God’s BUILDING—Know ye not that YE are the temple of God—the temple of God is holy, which temple YE are. And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have his eye upon this very promise in Samuel concerning a son to David, and of the house which he should build; when he says, (Hebrews 3:6,) CHRIST, AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE, WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE.

“As to the third and greatest difficulty, that also may be removed by a more just translation of 2 Samuel 7:14; for the Hebrew words do not properly signify what they are now made to speak. It is certain that the principal word, **בהעותו** behaavotho, is not the active infinitive of kal, which would be **בעותו**, but **העות** from **עיה** is in niphal, as **הגלות** from **גלה**. It is also certain that a verb, which in the active voice signifies to commit iniquity, may, in the passive signify to suffer for iniquity; and hence it is that nouns from such verbs sometimes signify iniquity, sometimes punishment. See Lowth’s Isaiah, p, 187, with many other authorities which shall be produced hereafter. The way being thus made clear, we are now prepared for abolishing our translation, if he commit

iniquity; and also for adopting the true one, even in his suffering for iniquity. The Messiah, who is thus the person possibly here spoken of, will be made still more manifest from the whole verse thus translated: I will be his father, and he shall be my son: EVEN IN HIS SUFFERING FOR INIQUITY, I shall chasten him with the rod of men, (with the rod due to men,) and with the stripes (due to) the children of ADAM. And this construction is well supported by Isaiah 53:4, 5: He hath carried OUR SORROWS, (i.e., the sorrows due to us, and which we must otherwise have suffered,) he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. See note, p. 479, in Hallet, on Hebrews 11:26. Thus, then, God declares himself the Father of the Son here meant; (see also Hebrews 1:5;) and promises that, even amidst the sufferings of this Son, (as they would be for the sins of others, not for his own,) his mercy should still attend him: nor should his favor be ever removed from this king, as it had been from Saul. And thus (as it follows) thine house (O David) and thy kingdom shall, in Messiah, be established for ever before ME: (before GOD:) thy throne shall be established for ever. Thus the angel, delivering his message to the virgin mother, Luke 1:32, 33, speaks as if he was quoting from this very prophecy: The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob FOR EVER: and of his kingdom there shall be no end. In 2 Samuel 7:16, **לפניך** lephaneycha, is rendered as **לפני** lephanai, on the authority of three Hebrew MSS., with the Greek and Syriac versions; and, indeed, nothing could be established for ever in the presence of David, but in the presence of God only.

“Having thus shown that the words fairly admit here the promise made to David, that from his seed should arise Messiah, the everlasting King; it may be necessary to add that, if the Messiah be the person here meant, as suffering innocently for the sins of others, Solomon cannot be; nor can this be a prophecy admitting such double sense, or be applied properly to two such opposite characters. Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of HIMSELF, or of SOME OTHER man? This was a question properly put by the Ethiopian treasurer, (Acts 8:34,) who never dreamed that such a description as he was reading could relate to different persons; and Philip shows him that the person was Jesus only. So here it may be asked, Of

whom speaketh the prophet this? of Solomon, or of Christ? It must be answered, Of Christ: one reason is, because the description does not agree to Solomon; and therefore Solomon being necessarily excluded in a single sense, must also be excluded in a double. Lastly, if it would be universally held absurd to consider the promise of Messiah made to Abraham as relating to any other person besides MESSIAH; why is there not an equal absurdity in giving a double sense to the promise of Messiah thus made to DAVID?

“Next to our present very improper translation, the cause of the common confusion here has been-not distinguishing the promise here made as to Messiah alone, from another made as to Solomon alone: the first brought by Nathan, the second by Gad; the first near the beginning of David’s reign, the second near the end of it; the first relating to Messiah’s spiritual kingdom, everlasting without conditions, the second relating to the fate of the temporal kingdom of Solomon, and his heirs, depending entirely on their obedience or rebellion, 1 Chronicles 22:8-13; 28:7. Let the first message be compared with this second in 1 Chronicles 22:8-13, which the Syriac version (at 1 Chronicles 22:8) tells us was delivered by a prophet, and the Arabian says by the prophet GAD. This second message was after David’s many wars, when he had shed much blood; and it was this second message that, out of all David’s sons, appointed Solomon to be his successor. At the time of the first message Solomon was not born; it being delivered soon after David became king at Jerusalem: but Solomon was born at the time of this second message. For though our translation very wrongly says, (1 Chronicles 22:9,) a son SHALL BE born to thee-and his name shall be Solomon; yet the Hebrew text expressly speaks of him as then born-Behold a son, (נולד, natus est,) IS BORN to thee: and therefore the words following must be rendered, Solomon IS his name, and I will give peace in his days: he shall build a house for my name, etc.

“From David’s address to God, after receiving the message by Nathan, it is plain that David understood the Son promised to be THE MESSIAH: in whom his house was to be established for ever. But the words which seem most expressive of this are in this verse now rendered very unintelligibly: And is this the manner of man? Whereas the words וזאת תורת האדם vezoth torath haadam literally signify, and this is (or must be) the law of the man, or of the Adam; i.e., this promise must relate to the law or



ordinance made by God to Adam, concerning the seed of the woman; the man, or the second ADAM; as the Messiah is expressly called by St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47. This meaning will be yet more evident from the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 17:17, where the words of David are now miserably rendered thus: And thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree; whereas the words **המעלה וראיתני כתור האדם** ureithani kethor haadam hammaalah literally signify, and thou hast regarded me according to the order of the ADAM THAT IS FUTURE, or THE MAN THAT IS FROM ABOVE: (for the word **המעלה** hammaalah very remarkably signifies hereafter as to time, and from above as to place:) and thus St. Paul, including both senses-THE SECOND MAN IS THE LORD FROM HEAVEN-and Adam is the figure of him that was to come, or the future, Romans 5:14. — See the Preface of the late learned Mr. Peters on Job, referred to and confirmed as to this interesting point in a note subjoined to my Sermon on A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, etc., P. 46-52, 8VO. 1765. A part of that note here follows: ‘The speech of David (2 Samuel 7:18-29) is such as one might naturally expect from a person overwhelmed with the greatness of the promised blessing: for it is abrupt, full of wonder, and fraught with repetitions. And now what can David say unto thee? What, indeed! For thou, LORD GOD knowest thy servant-thou knowest the hearts of all men, and seest how full my own heart is. For thy word’s sake-for the sake of former prophecies, and according to thine own heart-from the mere motive of thy wisdom and goodness, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. I now perceive the reason of those miraculous providences which have attended me from my youth up; taken from following the sheep, and conducted through all difficulties to be ruler of thy people; and shall I distrust the promise now made me? Thy words be true. If the preceding remarks on this whole passage be just and well grounded, then may we see clearly the chief foundation of what St. Peter tells us (Acts 2:30) concerning DAVID: that being a prophet, and KNOWING that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up CHRIST to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, etc.’”

## CHAPTER 8

*David subdues the Philistines, 1; and the Moabites, 2; and the king of Zobah, 3, 4; and the Syrians in general, 5-8. Toi, king of Hamath, sends to congratulate him on his victories over the king of Zobah, and sends him rich presents, 9-10. David dedicates all the spoils to God, 11-13. He garrisons Edom, 14; and reigns over all Israel, 15. An account of his chief officers, 16-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. *David took Metheg-ammah*** This is variously translated. The Vulgate has, Tulit David fraenum tributi, David removed the bondage of the tribute, which the Israelities paid to the Philistines. Some think it means a fortress, city, or strong town; but no such place as Metheg-ammah is known. Probably the Vulgate is nearest the truth. The versions are all different. See the following comparison of the principal passages here collated with the parallel place in 1 Chr:—

- S. 8, 1-David took Methegammah 3. David  
 C. 18, 1-David took Gath and her towns. 3. David
- S. smote Hadadezer 4. And David took from him  
 C. smote Hadarezer 4. And David took from him
- S. 1000 and 700 horsemen, and 20, 000 foot.  
 C. 1000 chariots, and 7000 horsemen, and 20, 000 foot.
- S. 6. Then David put garrisons in Syria 8. And  
 C. 6. Then David put in Syria 8. And
- S. from Bethah and Berothai cities of Hadadezer. 9.  
 C. from Tibhath and Chun cities of Hadarezer. 9.
- S. When Toi heard that David had smitten  
 C. When Tou heard that David had smitten
- S. Hadadezer 10. Then Toi sent Joram his son

C. Hadarezer 10. He sent Hadoram his son

S. 12-Syria and Moab 13-Syrians, in the valley

C. 11-Edom and Moab 12-Edomites, in the valley

S. of salt, 18, 000 17-Ahimelech-and Seraiah

C. of salt, 18, 000 16-Abimelech-and Shausha

S. was the scribe. 10, 16. Shobach the captain

C. was scribe. 19, 16. Shophach the captain

S. 17. David passed over Jordan, and came **הל אמה**

C. 17. David passed over Jordan and came **אלהם**

S. to Helam. 18. David slew 700

C. upon them 18. David slew of the Syrians 7000

S. chariots of the Syrians, and 40, 000 horsemen;

C. chariots, and 40, 000 footmen;

S. and smote Shobach, etc.

C. and killed Shophach, etc.

**Verse 2. *And measured them with a line-even with two lines*** It has been generally conjectured that David, after he had conquered Moab, consigned two-thirds of the inhabitants to the sword; but I think the text will bear a meaning much more reputable to that king. The first clause of the verse seems to determine the sense; he measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground-to put to death, and with one line to keep alive. Death seems here to be referred to the cities by way of metaphor; and, from this view of the subject we may conclude that two-thirds of the cities, that is, the strong places of Moab, were erased; and not having strong places to trust to, the text adds, So the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts, i.e., were obliged to pay tribute. The word line may mean the same here as our rod, i.e., the instrument by which land is measured. There are various opinions on this verse, with which I shall not trouble the reader. Much may be seen in Calmet and Dodd.

**Verse 3. *David smote-Hadadezer*** He is supposed to have been king of all Syria, except Phoenicia; and, wishing to extend his dominions to the

Euphrates, invaded a part of David's dominions which lay contiguous to it; but being attacked by David, he was totally routed.

**Verse 4. A thousand chariots** It is strange that there were a thousand chariots, and only seven hundred horsemen taken, and twenty thousand foot. But as the discomfiture appears complete, we may suppose that the chariots, being less manageable, might be more easily taken, while the horsemen might, in general, make their escape. The infantry also seem to have been surrounded, when twenty thousand of them were taken prisoners.

**David houghed all the chariot horses** If he did so, it was both unreasonable and inhuman; for, as he had so complete a victory, there was no danger of these horses falling into the enemy's hands; and if he did not choose to keep them, which indeed the law would not permit, he should have killed them outright; and then the poor innocent creatures would have been put out of pain. But does the text speak of houghing horses at all? It does not. Let us hear; וַיַּעֲקֹר דָּוִד אֶת כָּל הָרֶכֶב vayeakker David eth kol harecheb, And David disjointed all the chariots, except a hundred chariots which he reserved for himself. Now, this destruction of the chariots, was a matter of sound policy, and strict piety. God had censured those who trusted in chariots; piety therefore forbade David the use of them: and lest they should fall into the enemy's hands, and be again used against him, policy induced him to destroy them. The Septuagint render the words nearly as I have done, και παρελυσε δαυιδ παντα τα αρματα.

He kept however one hundred; probably as a sort of baggage or forage wagons.

**Verse 6. Brought gifts** Paid tribute.

**Verse 7. David took the shields of gold** We know not what these were. Some translate arms, others quivers, others bracelets, others collars, and others shields. They were probably costly ornaments by which the Syrian soldiers were decked and distinguished. And those who are called servants here, were probably the choice troops or body-guard of Hadadezer, as the argyraspides were of Alexander the Great. See Quintus Curtius.

**Verse 9. Toi king of Hamath** Hamath is supposed to be the famous city of Emesa, situated on the Orontes, in Syria. This was contiguous to

Hadadezer; and led him to wage war with Toi, that he might get possession of his territories. For a comparison of the 10th verse, see 1 Chronicles 18:9.

**Verse 13. *David gat him a name*** Became a very celebrated and eminent man. The Targum has it, David collected troops; namely, to recruit his army when he returned from smiting the Syrians. His many battles had no doubt greatly thinned his army.

***The valley of salt*** Supposed to be a large plain abounding in this mineral, about a league from the city of Palmyra or Tadmor in the wilderness.

**Verse 14. *He put garrisons in Edom*** He repaired the strong cities which he had taken, and put garrisons in them to keep the country in awe.

**Verse 16. *Joab-was over the host*** General and commander-in-chief over all the army.

***Ahilud-recorder*** מִזְכִּיר mazkir, remembrancer; one who kept a strict journal of all the proceedings of the king and operations of his army; a chronicler. See the margin.

**Verse 17. *Seraiah-the scribe*** Most likely the king's private secretary. See the margin.

**Verse 18. *Benaiah*** The chief of the second class of David's worthies. We shall meet with him again.

***The Cherethites and the Pelethites*** The former supposed to be those who accompanied David when he fled from Saul; the latter, those who came to him at Ziklag. But the Targum translates these two names thus, the archers and the slingers; and this is by far the most likely. It is not at all probable that David was without a company both of archers and slingers. The bow is celebrated in the funeral lamentation over Saul and Jonathan; and the sling was renowned as the weapon of the Israelites, and how expert David was in the use of it we learn from the death of Goliath. I take for granted that the Chaldee paraphrast is correct. No weapons then known were equally powerful with these; the spears, swords, and javelins, of other nations, were as stubble before them. The bow was the grand weapon of

our English ancestors; and even after the invention of firearms, they were with difficulty persuaded to prefer them and leave their archery.

## CHAPTER 9

*David inquires after the family of Jonathan, and is informed of Mephibosheth his son, 1-4. He sends for him and gives him all the land of Saul, 5-8; and appoints Ziba the servant of Saul, and his family, to till the ground for Mephibosheth, 9-13.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1.** *Is there yet any that is left* David recollecting the covenant made with his friend Jonathan, now inquires after his family. It is supposed that political considerations prevented him from doing this sooner. Reasons of state often destroy all the charities of life.

**Verse 3.** *That I may show the kindness of God unto him?* That is, the utmost, the highest degrees of kindness; as the hail of God, is very great hail, the mountains of God, exceeding high mountains: besides, this kindness was according to the covenant of God made between him and the family of Jonathan.

**Verse 4.** *Lo-debar.* Supposed to have been situated beyond Jordan; but there is nothing certain known concerning it.

**Verse 7.** *Will restore thee all the land* I believe this means the mere family estate of the house of Kish, which David as king might have retained, but which most certainly belonged, according to the Israelitish law, to the descendants of the family.

*And thou shalt eat bread at my table* This was kindness, (the giving up the land was justice,) and it was the highest honor that any subject could enjoy, as we may see from the reference made to it by our Lord, Luke 22:30: That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. For such a person David could do no more. His lameness rendered him unfit for any public employment.

**Verse 9.** *I have given unto thy master's son* Unless Ziba had been servant of Jonathan, this seems to refer to Micha, son of Mephibosheth, and so

some understand it; but it is more likely that Mephibosheth is meant, who is called son of Saul instead of grandson. Yet it is evident enough that the produce of the land went to the support of Micha, (see 2 Samuel 9:10,) for the father was provided for at the table of David; but all the patrimony belonged to Mephibosheth.

**Verse 10. *Thou therefore, and thy sons-shall till the land*** It seems that Ziba and his family had the care of the whole estate, and cultivated it at their own expense, yielding the half of the produce to the family of Mephibosheth. Ziba was properly the hind, whose duty and interest it was to take proper care of the ground, for the better it was cultivated the more it produced; and his half would consequently be the greater.

**Verse 11. *So shall thy servant do.*** The promises of Ziba were fair and specious, but he was a traitor in his heart, as we shall see in the rebellion of Absalom, and David's indulgence to this man is a blot in his character; at this time however he suspected no evil; circumstances alone can develop the human character. The internal villain can be known only when circumstances occur which can call his propensities into action; till then he may be reputed an honest man.

**Verse 13. *Did eat continually at the king's table*** He was fit for no public office, but was treated by the king with the utmost respect and affection.



## CHAPTER 10

*The king of Ammon being dead, David sends ambassadors to comfort his son Hanun, by 2. Hanun, misled by his courtiers, treats the messengers of David with great indignity, 3-5. The Ammonites, justly dreading David's resentment, send, and hire the Syrians to make war upon him, 6. Joab and Abishai meet them at the city of Medeba, and defeat them, 7-14. The Syrians collect another army, but are defeated by David with great slaughter, and make with him a separate peace, 15-19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 2. *I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash*** We do not know exactly the nature or extent of the obligation which David was under to the king of the Ammonites; but it is likely that the Nahash here mentioned was the same who had attacked Jabesh-gilead, and whom Saul defeated: as David had taken refuge with the Moabites, (1 Samuel 22:3,) and this was contiguous to the king of the Ammonites, his hatred to Saul might induce him to show particular kindness to David.

**Verse 3. *Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father*** It has been a matter of just complaint through all the history of mankind, that there is little sincerity in courts. Courtiers, especially, are suspicious of each other, and often mislead their sovereigns. They feel themselves to be insincere, and suspect others to be so too.

**Verse 4. *Shaved off the one half of their beards*** The beard is held in high respect in the East: the possessor considers it his greatest ornament; often swears by it; and, in matters of great importance, pledges it. Nothing can be more secure than a pledge of this kind; its owner will redeem it at the hazard of his life. The beard was never cut off but in mourning, or as a sign of slavery. Cutting off half of the beard and the clothes rendered the men ridiculous, and made them look like slaves: what was done to these men was an accumulation of insult.

**Verse 5. *Tarry at Jericho*** This city had not been rebuilt since the time of Joshua; but there were, no doubt, many cottages still remaining, and larger dwellings also, but the walls had not been repaired. As it must have been comparatively a private place, it was proper for these men to tarry in, as they would not be exposed to public notice.

**Verse 6. *The children of Ammon saw that they stank*** That is, that their conduct rendered them abominable. This is the Hebrew mode of expressing such a feeling. See Genesis 34:30.

***The Syrians of Bethrehob*** This place was situated at the extremity of the valley between Libanus and Anti-libanus. The Syrians of Zoba were subject to Hadadezer. Maacah was in the vicinity of Mount Hermon, beyond Jordan, in the Trachonitis.

***Ish-tob*** This was probably the same with Tob, to which Jephthah fled from the cruelty of his brethren. It was situated in the land of Gilead.

**Verse 7. *All the host of the mighty*** All his worthies, and the flower of his army.

**Verse 8. *At the entering in of the gate*** This was the city of Medeba, as we learn from 1 Chronicles 19:7.

**Verse 9. *Before and behind*** It is probable that one of the armies was in the field, and the other in the city, when Joab arrived. When he fronted this army, the other appears to have issued from the city, and to have taken him in the rear; he was therefore obliged to divide his army as here mentioned; one part to face the Syrians commanded by himself, and the other to face the Ammonites commanded by his brother Abishai.

**Verse 12. *Be of good courage*** This is a very fine military address, and is equal to any thing in ancient or modern times. Ye fight pro aris et focus; for every good, sacred and civil; for God, for your families, and for your country.

**Verse 14. *The Syrians were fled*** They betook themselves to their own confines, while the Ammonites escaped into their own city.

**Verse 16. *The Syrians that were beyond the river*** That is, the Euphrates.

**Hadarezer** This is the same that was overthrown by David, 2 Samuel 8:3 and there called Hadadezer; which is the reading here of about thirty of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS. But the 𐤁 resh and 𐤁 daleth are easily interchanged.

**Verse 17. David-gathered all Israel together** He thought that such a war required his own presence.

**Verse 18. SEVEN HUNDRED chariots-and forty thousand HORSEMEN** In the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 19:18, it is said, David slew of the Syrians **SEVENTHOUSAND** men, which fought in chariots. It is difficult to ascertain the right number in this and similar places. It is very probable that, in former times, the Jews expressed, as they often do now, their numbers, not by words at full length, but by numeral letters; and, as many of the letters bear a great similarity to each other, mistakes might easily creep in when the numeral letters came to be expressed by words at full length. This alone will account for the many mistakes which we find in the numbers in these books, and renders a mistake here very probable. The letter 𐤁 zain, with a dot above, stands for seven thousand, 𐤁 nun for seven hundred: the great similarity of these letters might easily cause the one to be mistaken for the other, and so produce an error in this place.

**Verse 19. Made peace with Israel** They made this peace separately, and were obliged to pay tribute to the Israelites. Some copies of the Vulgate add here after the word Israel, Expaverunt et fugerunt quinquaginta et octo millia coram Israel; "and they were panic-struck, and fled fifty-eight thousand of them before Israel." This reading is nowhere else to be found. "Thus," observes Dr. Delaney, "the arms of David were blessed; and God accomplished the promises which he had made to Abraham, Genesis 15:18, and renewed to Joshua, Joshua 1:2, 4." And thus, in the space of nineteen or twenty years, David had the good fortune to finish gloriously eight wars, all righteously undertaken, and all honourably terminated; viz. 1. The civil war with Ish-bosheth. 2. The war against the Jebusites. 3. The war against the Philistines and their allies. 4. The war against the Philistines alone. 5. The war against the Moabites. 6. The war against Hadadezer. 7. The war against the Idumeans. 8. The war against the Ammonites and Syrians. This last victory was soon followed by the complete conquest of the kingdom of the Ammonites, abandoned by their

allies. What glory to the monarch of Israel, had not the splendor of this illustrious epoch been obscured by a complication of crimes, of which one could never have even suspected him capable!

WE have now done with the first part of this book, in which we find David great, glorious, and pious: we come to the second part, in which we shall have the pain to observe him fallen from God, and his horn defiled in the dust by crimes of the most flagitious nature. Let him that most assuredly standeth take heed lest he fall.

## CHAPTER 11

*David sends Joab against the Ammonites, who besieges the city of Rabbah, 1. He sees Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah, bathing; is enamoured of her; sends for and takes her to his bed, 24. She conceives, and informs David, 5. David sends to Joab, and orders him to send to him Uriah, 6. He arrives; and David having inquired the state of the army, dismisses him, desiring him to go to his own house, 7, 8. Uriah sleeps at the door of the king's house, 9. The next day the king urges him to go to his house; but he refuses to go, and gives the most pious and loyal reasons for his refusal, 10-11. David after two days sends him back to the army, with a letter to Joab, desiring him to place Uriah in the front of the battle, that he may be slain, 12-15. He does so; and Uriah falls, 16, 17. Joab communicates this news in an artful message to David, 18-25. David sends for Bath-sheba and takes her to wife, and she bears him a son, 26, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. *When kings go forth*** This was about a year after the war with the Syrians spoken of before, and about the spring of the year, as the most proper season for military operations. Calmet thinks they made two campaigns, one in autumn and the other in spring; the winter being in many respects inconvenient, and the summer too hot.

**Verse 2. *In an evening-tide-David arose*** He had been reposing on the roof of his house, to enjoy the breeze, as the noonday was too hot for the performance of business. This is still a constant custom on the flat-roofed houses in the East.

***He saw a woman washing herself*** How could any woman of delicacy expose herself where she could be so fully and openly viewed? Did she not know that she was at least in view of the king's terrace? Was there no design in all this? *Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri.* In a Bengal town pools of water are to be seen everywhere, and women may be seen

morning and evening bathing in them, and carrying water home. Thus David might have seen Bath-sheba, and no blame attach to her.

**Ver. 4** shows us that this washing was at the termination of a particular period.

**Verse 3. *The daughter of Eliam*** Called, 1 Chronicles 3:5, Ammiel; a word of the same meaning, The people of my God, The God of my people. This name expressed the covenant-I will be your God; We will be thy people.

**Verse 4. *And she came in unto him*** We hear nothing of her reluctance, and there is no evidence that she was taken by force.

**Verse 5. *And the woman conceived*** A proof of the observation on 2 Samuel 11:4; as that is the time in which women are most apt to conceive.

**Verse 8. *Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet.*** Uriah had come off a journey, and needed this refreshment; but David's design was that he should go and lie with his wife, that the child now conceived should pass for his, the honor of Bath-sheba be screened, and his own crime concealed. At this time he had no design of the murder of Uriah, nor of taking Bath-sheba to wife.

***A mess of meat from the king.*** All this was artfully contrived.

**Verse 9. *Slept at the door*** That is, in one of the apartments or niches in the court of the king's house. But in Bengal servants and others generally sleep on the verandahs or porches in face of their master's house.

**Verse 10. *Camest thou not from thy journey?*** It is not thy duty to keep watch or guard; thou art come from a journey, and needest rest and refreshment.

**Verse 11. *The ark, and Israel-abide in tents*** It appears therefore that they had taken the ark with them to battle.

This was the answer of a brave, generous and disinterested man. I will not indulge myself while all my fellow soldiers are exposed to hardships, and even the ark of the Lord in danger. Had Uriah no suspicion of what had been done in his absence?

**Verse 13. *He made him drunk*** Supposing that in this state he would have been off his guard, and hastened down to his house.

**Verse 14. *David wrote a letter*** This was the sum of treachery and villany. He made this most noble man the carrier of letters which prescribed the mode in which he was to be murdered. This case some have likened to that of Bellerophon, son of Glaucus, king of Ephyra, who being in the court of Proetus, king of the Argives, his queen Antia, or as others Sthenoboea, fell violently in love with him; but he, refusing to gratify her criminal passions, was in revenge accused by her to Proetus her husband, as having attempted to corrupt her. Proetus not willing to violate the laws of hospitality by slaying him in his own house, wrote letters to Jobates, king of Lycia, the father of Sthenoboea, and sent them by the hand of Bellerophon, stating his crime, and desiring Jobates to put him to death. To meet the wishes of his son-in-law, and keep his own hands innocent of blood, he sent him with a small force against a very warlike people called the Solymi; but, contrary to all expectation, he not only escaped with his life, but gained a complete victory over them. He was afterwards sent upon several equally dangerous and hopeless expeditions, but still came off with success; and to reward him Jobates gave him one of his daughters to wife, and a part of his kingdom. Sthenoboea, hearing this, through rage and despair killed herself.

I have given this history at large, because many have thought it not only to be parallel to that of Uriah, but to be a fabulous formation from the Scripture fact: for my own part, I scarcely see in them any correspondence, but in the simple circumstance that both carried those letters which contained their own condemnation. From the fable of Bellerophon came the proverb, *Bellerophontis literas portare*, “to carry one’s own condemnation.”

**Verse 17. *Uriah the Hitite died also.*** He was led to the attack of a place defended by valiant men; and in the heat of the assault, Joab and his men retired from this brave soldier, who cheerfully gave up his life for his king and his country.

**Verse 20. *If-the king’s wrath arise*** It is likely that Joab had by some indiscretion suffered loss about this time; and he contrived to get rid of the odium by connecting the transaction with the death of Uriah, which he knew would be so pleasing to the king.

**Verse 25. *The sword devoureth one as well as another*** What abominable hypocrisy was here! He well knew that Uriah's death was no chance-medley; he was by his own order thrust on the edge of the sword.

**Verse 26. *She mourned for her husband.*** The whole of her conduct indicates that she observed the form without feeling the power of sorrow. She lost a captain and got a king for her spouse; this must have been deep affliction indeed: and therefore:—

— *Lachrymas non sponte cadentes Effudit;  
gemitusque expressit pectore laeto.*

*“She shed reluctant tears,  
and forced out groans from a joyful heart.”*

**Verse 27. *When the mourning was past*** Probably it lasted only seven days.

***She became his wife*** This hurried marriage was no doubt intended on both sides to cover the pregnancy.

***But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.*** It was necessary to add this, lest the splendor of David's former virtues should induce any to suppose his crimes were passed over, or looked on with an indulgent eye, by the God of purity and justice. Sorely he sinned, and sorely did he suffer for it; he sowed one grain of sweet, and reaped a long harvest of calamity and wo.

ON a review of the whole, I hesitate not to say that the preceding chapter is an illustrious proof of the truth of the sacred writings. Who that intended to deceive, by trumping up a religion which he designed to father on the purity of God, would have inserted such an account of one of its most zealous advocates, and once its brightest ornament? God alone, whose character is impartiality, has done it, to show that his religion, *librata ponderibus suis*, will ever stand independently of the conduct of its professors.

Drs. Delaney, Chandler, and others, have taken great pains to excuse and varnish this conduct of David; and while I admire their ingenuity, I abhor the tendency of their doctrine, being fully convinced that he who writes on



this subject should write like the inspired penman, who tells the TRUTH, the WHOLE TRUTH, and NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

David may be pitied because he had fallen from great eminence; but who can help deploring the fate of the brave, the faithful, the incorruptible Uriah? Bath-sheba was probably first in the transgression, by a too public display of her charms; by which accidentally, the heart of David was affected wounded, and blinded. He committed one crime which he employed many shifts to conceal; these all failing, he is led from step to step to the highest degree of guilt. Not only does he feel that his and her honor, but even their lives, are at stake; for death, by the law of Moses, was the punishment of adultery. He thought therefore that either Uriah must die, or he and Bath-sheba perish for their iniquity; for that law had made no provision to save the life of even a king who transgressed its precepts. He must not imbrue his own hands in the blood of this brave man; but he employs him on a service from which his bravery would not permit him to shrink; and it which, from the nature of his circumstances, he must inevitably perish. The awful trial is made, and it succeeds. The criminal king and his criminal paramour are for a moment concealed; and one of the bravest of men falls an affectionate victim for the safety and support of him by whom his spotless blood is shed! But what shall we say of Joab, the wicked executor of the base commands of his fallen master? He was a ruffian, not a soldier; base and barbarous beyond example, in his calling; a pander to the vices of his monarch, while he was aware that he was outraging every law of religion, piety, honor, and arms! It is difficult to state the characters, and sum up and apportion the quantity of vice chargeable on each.

Let David, once a pious, noble, generous, and benevolent hero, who, when almost perishing with thirst, would not taste the water which his brave men had acquired at the hazard of their lives; let this David, I say, be considered an awful example of apostasy from religion, justice, and virtue; Bath-sheba, of lightness and conjugal infidelity; Joab, of base, unmanly, and cold-blooded cruelty; Uriah, of untarnished heroism, inflexible fidelity, and unspotted virtue; and then justice will be done to each character. For my own part, I must say, I pity David; I venerate Uriah; I detest Joab, and think meanly of Bath-sheba. Similar crimes have been repeatedly

committed in similar circumstances. I shall take my leave of the whole with:—

*Id commune malum; semel insanivimus omnes;  
Aut sumus, aut fuimus, aut possumus,  
omne quod hic est.*

God of purity and mercy! save the reader from the **ευπεριστατος αμαρτια**, well circumstanced sin; and let him learn,

*“Where many mightier have been slain,  
By thee unsaved, he falls.”*

See the notes on the succeeding chapter.

## CHAPTER 12

*The Lord sends Nathan the prophet to reprove David; which he does by means of a curious parable, 1-4. David is led, unknowingly, to pronounce his own condemnation, 5, 6. Nathan charges the guilt home on his conscience; and predicts a long train of calamities which should fall on him and his family, 7-12. David confesses his sin; and Nathan gives him hope of God's mercy, and foretells the death of the child born in adultery, 13, 14. The child is taken ill; David fasts and prays for its restoration, 15-17. On the seventh day the child dies, and David is comforted, 18-24. Solomon is born of Bath-sheba, 25, 26. Joab besieges Rabbah of the Ammonites, takes the city of waters, and sends for David to take Rabbah, 27, 28. He comes, takes it, gets much spoil, and puts the inhabitants to hard labor, 29-31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1.** *There were two men in one city* See a discourse on fables at the end of Judges 9:56, and a discourse on parabolic writing at the end of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.

There is nothing in this parable that requires illustration; its bent is evident; and it was construed to make David, unwittingly, pass sentence on himself. It was in David's hand, what his own letters were in the hands of the brave but unfortunate Uriah.

**Verse 3.** *And lay in his bosom* This can only mean that this lamb was what we call a pet or favourite in the family, else the circumstance would be very unnatural, and most likely would have prevented David from making the application which he did, as otherwise it would have appeared absurd. It is the only part of this parable which is at variance with nature and fact.

**Verse 5.** *The man shall surely die* Literally ב מות **ben maveth**, "he is a son of death," a very bad man, and one who deserves to die. But the law did not sentence a sheep-stealer to death; let us hear it: If a man steal an ox

or a sheep, he shall restore FIVE OXEN for an ox, and FOUR SHEEP for a sheep, Exodus 22:1; and hence David immediately says, He shall restore the lamb FOURFOLD.

**Verse 7. *Thou art the man.*** What a terrible word! And by it David appears to have been transfixed, and brought into the dust before the messenger of God.

THOU ART this son of death, and thou shalt restore this lamb FOURFOLD. It is indulging fancy too much to say David was called, in the course of a just Providence to pay this fourfold debt? to lose four sons by untimely deaths, viz., this son of Bath-sheba, on whom David had set his heart, was slain by the Lord; Amnon, murdered by his brother Absalom; Absalom, slain in the oak by Joab; and Adonijah, slain by the order of his brother Solomon, even at the altar of the Lord! The sword and calamity did not depart from his house, from the murder of wretched Amnon by his brother to the slaughter of the sons of Zedekiah, before their father's eyes, by the king of Babylon. His daughter was dishonored by her own brother, and his wives contaminated publicly by his own son! How dreadfully, then, was David punished for his sin! Who would repeat his transgression to share in its penalty? Can his conduct ever be an inducement to, or an encouragement in, sin? Surely, No. It must ever fill the reader and the hearer with horror. Behold the goodness and severity of God! Reader, lay all these solemn things to heart.

**Verse 8. *Thy master's wives into thy bosom*** Perhaps this means no more than that he had given him absolute power over every thing possessed by Saul; and as it was the custom for the new king to succeed even to the wives and concubines, the whole harem of the deceased king, so it was in this case; and the possession of the wives was a sure proof that he had got all regal rights. But could David, as the son-in-law of Saul, take the wives of his father-in-law? However, we find delicacy was seldom consulted in these cases; and Absalom lay with his own father's wives in the most public manner, to show that he had seized on the kingdom, because the wives of the preceding belonged to the succeeding king, and to none other.

**Verse 9. *Thou hast killed Uriah*** THOU art the MURDERER, as having planned his death; the sword of the Ammonites was THY instrument only.

**Verse 11. *I will take thy wives*** That is, In the course of my providence I will permit all this to be done. Had David been faithful, God, by his providence, would have turned all this aside; but now, by his sin, he has made that providence his enemy which before was his friend.

**Verse 13. *The Lord-hath put away thy sin*** Many have supposed that David's sin was now actually pardoned, but this is perfectly erroneous; David, as an adulterer, was condemned to death by the law of God; and he had according to that law passed sentence of death upon himself. God alone, whose law that was could revoke that sentence, or dispense with its execution; therefore Nathan, who had charged the guilt home upon his conscience, is authorized to give him the assurance that he should not die a temporal death for it: The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. This is all that is contained in the assurance given by Nathan: Thou shalt not die that temporal death; thou shalt be preserved alive, that thou mayest have time to repent, turn to God, and find mercy. If the fifty-first Psalm, as is generally supposed, was written on this occasion, then it is evident (as the Psalm must have been written after this interview) that David had not received pardon for his sin from God at the time he composed it; for in it he confesses the crime in order to find mercy.

There is something very remarkable in the words of Nathan: The Lord also hath PUT AWAY thy sin; thou shalt not die; **לֹא תָמוּת גַּם יְהוָה הֵעִבִּיר** **חַטָּאתְךָ** gam Yehovah heebir chattathecha lo thamuth, Also Jehovah HATH CAUSED thy sin TO PASS OVER, or transferred thy sin; THOU shalt not die. God has transferred the legal punishment of this sin to the child; HE shall die, THOU shalt not die; and this is the very point on which the prophet gives him the most direct information: The child that is born unto thee shall SURELY die; **מוֹת יָמוּת** moth yamuth, dying he shall die-he shall be in a dying state seven days, and then he shall die. So God immediately struck the child, and it was very sick.

**Verse 16. *David-besought God for the child*** How could he do so, after the solemn assurance that he had from God that the child should die? The justice of God absolutely required that the penalty of the law should be exacted; either the father or the son shall die. This could not be reversed.

**Verse 20. *David arose from the earth, and washed*** Bathing, anointing the body, and changing the apparel, are the first outward signs among the Hindoos of coming out of a state of mourning or sickness.

**Verse 22. *Who can tell*** David, and indeed all others under the Mosaic dispensation, were so satisfied that all God's threatenings and promises were conditional, that even in the most positive assertions relative to judgments, etc., they sought for a change of purpose. And notwithstanding the positive declaration of Nathan, relative to the death of the child, David sought for its life, not knowing but that might depend on some unexpressed condition, such as earnest prayer, fasting, humiliation, etc., and in these he continued while there was hope. When the child died, he ceased to grieve, as he now saw that this must be fruitless. This appears to be the sole reason of David's importunity.

**Verse 23. *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*** It is not clear whether David by this expressed his faith in the immortality of the soul; going to him may only mean, I also shall die, and be gathered to my fathers, as he is. But whether David expressed this or not, we know that the thing is true; and it is one of the most solid grounds of consolation to surviving friends that they shall by and by be joined to them in a state of conscious existence. This doctrine has a very powerful tendency to alleviate the miseries of human life and reconcile us to the death of most beloved friends. And were we to admit the contrary, grief, in many cases, would wear out its subject before it wore out itself. Even the heathens derived consolation from the reflection that they should meet their friends in a state of conscious existence. And a saying in Cicero Deuteronomy Senectute, which he puts in the mouth of Cato of Utica, has been often quoted, and is universally admired:—

O praelarum diem, cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium coetumque proficiscar, cumque ex hac turba et colluvione discedam! Proficiscar enim non ad eos solum viros de quibus ante dixi; sed etiam ad Catonem meum quo nemo vir melior natus est, nemo pietate praestantior: cujus a me corpus crematum est; quod contra decuit ab illo meum. Animus vero non me deserens, sed respectans, in ea profecto loca discessit, quo mihi ipsi cernebat esse veniendum: quem ego meum catum fortiter ferre visus sum: non quod aequo animo ferrem: sed me ipse consolabar, existimans, non

longinquum inter nos digressum et discessum fore. CATO MAJOR,  
Deuteronomy Senectute, in fin.

“O happy day, (says he,) when I shall quit this impure and corrupt multitude, and join myself to that divine company and council of souls who have quitted the earth before me! There I shall find, not only those illustrious personages to whom I have spoken, but also my Cato, who I can say was one of the best men ever born, and whom none ever excelled in virtue and piety. I have placed his body on that funeral pyre whereon he ought to have laid mine. But his soul has not left me; and, without losing sight of me, he has only gone before into a country where he saw I should soon rejoin him. This my lot I seem to bear courageously; not indeed that I do bear it with resignation, but I shall comfort myself with the persuasion that the interval between his departure and mine will not be long.”

And we well know who has taught us not to sorrow as those without hope for departed friends.

**Verse 24. *David comforted Bath-sheba*** His extraordinary attachment to this beautiful woman was the cause of all his misfortunes.

***He called his name Solomon*** This name seems to have been given prophetically, for **שְׁלֹמֹה** sholomah signifies peaceable, and there was almost uninterrupted peace during his reign.

**Verse 25. *Called-Jedidiah*** **יְדִידִיָּה**, literally, the beloved of the Lord. This is the first instance I remember of a minister of God being employed to give a name to the child of one of his servants. But it is strange that the name given by the father was that alone which prevailed.

**Verse 26. *And took the royal city.*** How can this be, when Joab sent to David to come to take the city, in consequence of which David did come and take that city? The explanation seems to be this: Rabbah was composed of a city and citadel; the former, in which was the king’s residence, Joab had taken, and supposed he could soon render himself master of the latter, and therefore sends to David to come and take it, lest, he taking the whole, the city should be called after his name.

**Verse 27. *And have taken the city of waters.*** The city where the tank or reservoir was that supplied the city and suburbs with water. Some think

that the original, **לכדתי את עיר המים** lachadti eth ir hammayim, should be translated I have intercepted, or cut off, the waters of the city: and Houbigant translates the place, et aquas ab urbe jam derivavi; “And I have already drawn off the waters from the city.” This perfectly agrees with the account in Josephus, who says **των τε υδατων αυτους αποτεμνομενος**, having cut off their waters, Antiq., lib. vii., cap. 7. This was the reason why David should come speedily, as the citadel, deprived of water, could not long hold out.

**Verse 30. The weight whereof was a talent of gold** If this talent was only seven pounds, as Whiston says, David might have carried it on his head with little difficulty; but this weight, according to common computation, would amount to more than one hundred pounds!

If, however, **משקלה** mishkalah be taken for the value, not the weight then all is plain as the worth of the crown will be about £5075 15s. 7d. sterling. Now this seems to be the true sense, because of the added words with the precious stones; i.e., the gold of the crown, and the jewels with which it was adorned, were equal in value to a talent of gold.

**Verse 31. He brought forth the people** And put them under saws. From this representation a great cry has been raised against “David’s unparalleled, if not diabolic, cruelty.” I believe this interpretation was chiefly taken from the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 20:3, where it is said, he cut them with saws, and with axes, etc. Instead of **וישר** vaiyasar, he sawed, we have here (in Samuel) **וישם** vaiyasem, he put them; and these two words differ from each other only in a part of a single letter, **ר** resh for **מ** mem. And it is worthy of remark, that instead of **וישר** vaiyasar, he sawed, in 1 Chronicles 20:3, six or seven MSS. collated by Dr. Kennicott have **וישם** vaiyasem, he put them; nor is there found any various reading in all the MSS. yet collated for the text in this chapter, that favors the common reading in Chronicles. The meaning therefore is, He made the people slaves, and employed them in sawing, making iron harrows, or mining, (for the word means both,) and in hewing of wood, and making of brick. Sawing asunder, hacking, chopping, and hewing human beings, have no place in this text, no more than they had in David’s conduct towards the Ammonites.



It is surprising, and a thing to be deplored, that in this and similar cases our translators had not been more careful to sift the sense of the original words by which they would have avoided a profusion of exceptionable meanings with which they have clothed many passages of the sacred writings. Though I believe our translation to be by far the best in any language, ancient or modern, yet I am satisfied it stands much in need of revision. Most of the advantages which our unbelievers have appeared to have over certain passages of Scripture, have arisen from an inaccurate or false translation of the terms in the original; and an appeal to this has generally silenced the gainsayers. But in the time in which our translation was made, Biblical criticism was in its infancy, if indeed it did exist; and we may rather wonder that we find things so well, than be surprised that they are no better.

## CHAPTER 13

*Amnon falls in love with his half-sister Tamar, and feigns himself sick, and requests her to attend him, 1-6. David sends her to him, and he violates her, 7-14. He then hates her, and expels her from his house, 15-17, She rends her garments, puts ashes on her head, and goes forth weeping, 18, 19. She is met by Absalom her brother, who, understanding her case, determines the death of Amnon, 20-22. Two years after, he invites all his brothers to a sheep-shearing, when he orders his servants to murder Amnon, 23-29. Tidings come to David that Absalom has slain all the king's sons, which fill him with the bitterest distress, 30, 31. The rest soon arrive, and he finds that Amnon only is killed, 32-36. Absalom flees to Talmai, king of Geshur, where he remains three years, 37, 38. David longs after Absalom, having become reconciled to the death of Amnon, 39.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. *Whose name was Tamar*** Tamar was the daughter of David and Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur, and the uterine sister of Absalom. Amnon was David's eldest son by Ahinoam. She was therefore sister to Amnon only by the father's side, i.e., half-sister; but whole sister to Absalom.

**Verse 2. *Amnon was so vexed-for she was a virgin*** It has been well remarked that "the passion of love is nowhere so wasting and vexatious, as where it is unlawful. A quick sense of guilt, especially where it is enormous, as in the present instance, strikes the soul with horror; and the impossibility of an innocent gratification loads that horror with desperation: a conflict too cruel and too dreadful for human bearing." -Delaney.

**Verse 3. *Jonadab was a very subtle man.*** And most diabolic advice did he give to his cousin. We talk of the simplicity and excellence of primitive times! "Say not thou what is the cause that the former days were better

than these.” Take them altogether, we may thank God that they are past, and pray him that they may never return.

**Verse 12. *Nay, my brother*** There is something exceedingly tender and persuasive in this speech of Tamar; but Amnon was a mere brute, and it was all lost on him.

**Verse 13. *Speak unto the king*** So it appears that she thought that the king, her father, would give her to him as wife. This is another strong mark of indelicacy in those simple but barbarous times. There might have been some excuse for such connections under the patriarchal age, but there was none now. But perhaps she said this only to divert him from his iniquitous purpose, that she might get out of his hands.

**Verse 15. *Hated her exceedingly*** Amnon’s conduct to his sister was not only brutal but inexplicable. It would be easy to form conjectures concerning the cause, but we can arrive at no certainty.

**Verse 18. *A garment of divers colors*** See the note on Genesis 37:3, where the same words occur.

**Verse 21. *But when King David heard*** To this verse the Septuagint add the following words: *και ουκ ελυπησε το πνευμα αμνων του υιου αυτου, οτι ηγαπα αυτον, οτι πρωτοτοκος αυτου ην*; “But he would not grieve the soul of Amnon his son, for he loved him, because he was his first-born.” The same addition is found in the Vulgate and in Josephus, and it is possible that this once made a part of the Hebrew text.

**Verse 23. *Absalom had sheep-shearers*** These were times in which feasts were made, to which the neighbors and relatives of the family were invited.

**Verse 26. *Let my brother Amnon go*** He urged this with the more plausibility, because Amnon was the first-born, and presumptive heir to the kingdom; and he had disguised his resentment so well before, that he was not suspected.

**Verse 30. *Absalom hath slain all the king’s sons*** Fame never lessens but always magnifies a fact. Report, contrary to the nature of all other things, gains strength by going.

Virgil has given, in his best manner, a fine personification of Fame or Evil Report. — AEN. iv., 173.

*Extemplo Libyae magnas it Fama per urbes;  
Fama, malum qua non aliud velocius ullum,  
Mobilitate viget, viresque adquirat eundo, etc.*

*“Now Fame, tremendous fiend! without delay,  
Through Libyan cities took her rapid way;  
Fame, the swift plague, that every moment grows,  
And gains new strength and vigor as she goes,” etc.*

**Verse 32. *And Jonadab-said-Amnon only is dead*** This was a very bad man, and here speaks coolly of a most bloody tragedy, which himself had contrived.

**Verse 37. *Absalom fled*** As he had committed wilful murder, he could not avail himself of a city of refuge, and was therefore obliged to leave the land of Israel, and take refuge with Talmai, king of Geshur, his grandfather by his mother’s side. See 2 Samuel 3:3.

**Verse 39. *David longed to go forth unto Absalom*** We find that he had a very strong paternal affection for this young man, who appears to have had little to commend him but the beauty of his person. David wished either to go to him, or to bring him back; for the hand of time had now wiped off his tears for the death of his son Amnon. Joab had marked this disposition, and took care to work on it, in order to procure the return of Absalom. It would have been well for all parties had Absalom ended his days at Geshur. His return brought increasing wretchedness to his unfortunate father. And it may be generally observed that those undue, unreasonable paternal attachments are thus rewarded.

## CHAPTER 14

*A woman of Tekoah, by the advice of Joab, comes to the king; and by a fictitious story persuades him to recall Absalom, 1-20. Joab is permitted to go to Geshur, and bring Absalom from thence, 21-23. Absalom comes to Jerusalem to his own house, but is forbidden to see the king's face, 24. An account of Absalom's beauty, and the extraordinary weight of his hair, 25, 26. His children, 27. He strives to regain the king's favor, and employs Joab as an intercessor, 28-32. David is reconciled to him, 33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 2. *Joab sent to Tekoah*** Tekoah, according to St. Jerome, was a little city in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles from Jerusalem.

There are several circumstances relative to this woman and her case which deserve to be noticed:—

1. She was a widow, and therefore her condition of life was the better calculated to excite compassion.
2. She lived at some distance from Jerusalem, which rendered the case difficult to be readily inquired into; and consequently there was the less danger of detection.
3. She was advanced in years, as Josephus says, that her application might have the more weight.
4. She put on mourning, to heighten the idea of distress.
5. She framed a case similar to that in which David stood, in order to convince him of the reasonableness of sparing Absalom.
6. She did not make the similitude too plain and visible, lest the king should see her intention before she had obtained a grant of pardon. Thus her circumstances, her mournful tale, her widow's needs, her aged person, and her impressive manner, all combined to make one united impression on the king's heart. We need not wonder at her success. See Bishop Patrick.

**Verse 5. *I am indeed a widow woman*** It is very possible that the principal facts mentioned here were real, and that Joab found out a person whose circumstances bore a near resemblance to that which he wished to represent.

**Verse 7. *The whole family is risen*** They took on them the part of the avenger of blood; the nearest akin to the murdered person having a right to slay the murderer.

***They shall quench my coal which is left*** A man and his descendants or successors are often termed in Scripture a lamp or light. So, 2 Samuel 21:17, the men of David said, when they swore that he should no more go out with them to battle, That thou QUENCH not the LIGHT of Israel. See also Psalm 132:17. And to raise up a lamp to a person signifies his having a posterity to continue his name and family upon the earth: thus, quench my coal that is left means destroying all hope of posterity, and extinguishing the family from among the people. The heathens made use of the same similitude. The few persons who survived the deluge of Deucalion are termed ζῶπυρα living coals, because by them the vital flame of the human race was to be rekindled on the earth.

**Verse 8. *I will give charge concerning thee.*** This would not do, it was too distant; and she could not by it bring her business to a conclusion: so she proceeds:—

**Verse 9. *The iniquity be on me*** She intimates that, if the king should suppose that the not bringing the offender to the assigned punishment might reflect on the administration of justice in the land, she was willing that all blame should attach to her and her family, and the king and his throne be guiltless.

**Verse 10. *Whosoever saith aught unto thee*** Neither did this bring the matter to such a bearing that she could come to her conclusion, which was, to get the king pledged by a solemn promise that all proceedings relative to the case should be stopped.

**Verse 11. *Let the king remember the Lord thy God*** Consider that when God is earnestly requested to show mercy, he does it in the promptest manner; he does not wait till the case is hopeless: the danger to which my

son is exposed is imminent; if the king do not decide the business instantly, it may be too late.

*And he said, As the Lord liveth*

the soul. This intimates that, after human life is ended, the soul has a state of separate existence with God. This was certainly the opinion of these translators, and was the opinion of the ancient Jews, at least three hundred years before the incarnation; about which time this translation was made. The Vulgate has, *Nec volt Deus perire animam*, "Nor does God will the destruction of the soul." God is not the author of death; neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living; imitate him; pardon and recall thy son.

**Verse 20. *According to the wisdom of an angel of God*** This is quite in the style of Asiatic flattery. A European is often addressed, "Saheb can do every thing; we can do nothing; none can prevent the execution of Saheb's commands; Saheb is God." See WARD.

**Verse 21. *And the king said unto Joab*** It appears that Joab was present at the time when the woman was in conference with the king, and no doubt others of David's courtiers or officers were there also.

**Verse 24. *Let him not see my face.*** He would not at once restore him to favor, though he had now remitted his crime; so that he should not die for it. It was highly proper to show this detestation of the crime, and respect for justice.

**Verse 25. *None to be so much praised as Absalom*** It was probably his personal beauty that caused the people to interest themselves so much in his behalf; for the great mass of the public is ever caught and led by outward appearances.

***There was no blemish in him.*** He was perfect and regular in all his features, and in all his proportions.

**Verse 26. *When he polled his head*** Not at any particular period, but when the hair became too heavy for him. On this account of the extraordinary weight of Absalom's hair, see the observations at the end of this chapter. {2 Samuel 14:30}

**Verse 27. *Unto Absalom there were born*** These children did not survive him; see 2 Samuel 18:18.



**Tamar** The Septuagint adds, And she became the wife of Roboam, the son of Solomon, and bare to him Abia; see Matthew 1:7. Josephus says the same. This addition is not found in the other versions.

**Verse 30. Go and set it on fire** This was strange conduct, but it had the desired effect. He had not used his influence to get Absalom to court; now he uses it, and succeeds.

ADDITIONAL observations on ver. 26:—

“And at every year’s end, he (Absalom) polled his head; and he weighed the hair at two hundred shekels.”

The very learned Bochart has written a dissertation on this subject (vide Bocharti Opera, vol. iii., col. 883, edit. Lugd. 1692) in a letter to his friend M. Faukell. I shall give the substance in what follows.

There is nothing more likely than that corruptions in the Scripture numerals have taken place. Budaeus de Asse (lib. ii., p. 49 and 51, also lib. iii., p. 67 etc.) complains loudly of this.

This might easily have happened, as in former times the numbers in the sacred writings appear to have been expressed by single letters. The letter **Ϛ** resh stands for two hundred, and might in this place be easily mistaken for **ϛ** daleth which signifies four; but this may be thought to be too little, as it would not amount to more than a quarter of a pound; yet, if the two hundred shekels be taken in the amount will be utterly incredible; for Josephus says, (Antiq. lib. vii., cap. 8,) **σικλους διακοσιους, αυτοι δε εισι πεντε μναι**, i.e., “Two hundred shekels make five minae,” and in lib. xiv., cap. 12. he says, **η δε μνα παρ’ ημιν ισχει λιτρας β’ και ημισυ**; “And a mina with us (i.e., the Jews) weighs two pounds and a half.” This calculation makes Absalom’s hair weigh twelve pounds and a half! Credat Judaeus Apella!

Indeed, the same person tells us that the hair of Absalom was so thick, etc., **ως μολις αυτην ημεραις αποκειρειν οκτω**, “that eight days were scarcely sufficient to cut it off in! “This is rabbinism, with a witness.

Epiphanius, in his treatise Deuteronomy Ponderibus et Mensuris, casts much more light on this place, where he says, **σικλος ο λεγεται και**

κοδραντης τεταρτον μεν εστι της ουγκιας, ημισυ δε του στατηρος, δυο δραχμας εχων; “A shekel, (i.e., a common or king’s shekel, equal to half a shekel of the sanctuary,) which is called also a quarter, is the fourth part of an ounce, or half a stater; which is about two drachms.” This computation seems very just, as the half-shekel, (i.e., of the sanctuary,) Exodus 30:13, which the Lord commanded the children of Israel to give as an offering for their souls, is expressly called in Matthew 17:24, **το διδραχμον**, “two drachms:” and our Lord wrought a miracle to pay this, which the Romans then exacted by way of tribute: and Peter took out of the fish’s mouth a stater, which contained exactly four drachms or one shekel, (of the sanctuary), the tribute money for our Lord and himself.

The king’s shekel was about the fourth part of an ounce, according to what Epiphanius says above; and Hesychius says the same: **δυναται δε ο σικλος δυο οραχμας αττικας**; “A shekel is equal to, or worth, two Attic drachms.” The whole amount, therefore, of the two hundred shekels is about fifty ounces, which make four pounds two ounces, Troy weight, or three pounds two ounces, Avoirdupois. This need not, says my learned author, be accounted incredible, especially as abundance of oil and ointments were used by the ancients in dressing their heads; as is evident, not only from many places in the Greek and Roman writers, but also from several places in the sacred writings. See Psalm 23:5; Ecclesiastes 9:8; Matthew 6:17.

Josephus also informs us that the Jews not only used ointments, but that they put gold dust in their hair, that it might flame in the sun; and this they might do in considerable quantities, as gold was so plentiful among them. I must own I have known an instance that makes much for Bochart’s argument: an officer, who had upwards of two pounds of powder and ointments put on his head daily, whose hair did not weigh a fourth part of that weight. And Absalom, being exceedingly vain, might be supposed to make a very extensive use of these things. There are some, however, who endeavor to solve the difficulty by understanding **שקל** shakal to mean rather the value than the weight.

Bochart concludes this elaborate dissertation, in which he appears to have ransacked all the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman authors for proofs of his opinion, by exhorting his friend in these words of Horace:—

— *Si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.*

To me the above is quite unsatisfactory; and, with due deference to so great a character, I think I have found out something better.

I believe the text is not here in its original form; and that a mistake has crept into the numeral letters. I imagine that ל lamed, THIRTY, was first written; which, in process of time, became changed for ר resh, TWO HUNDRED, which might easily have happened from the similarity of the letters. But if this be supposed to be too little, (which I think it is not,) being only seven ounces and a half in the course of a year; let it be observed that the sacred text does not limit it to that quantity of time, for מִקֵּץ יָמִים לְיָמִים mikkets yamim laiyamim signifies literally, “From the end of days to days;” which Jonathan properly renders, מִזְמַן עַד לְעַד mizzeman iddan leiddan, “at proper or convenient times,” viz., when it grew too long or weighty, which it might be several times in the year. Besides, this was not all his hair; for his head was not shaved but polled, i.e., the redundancy cut off.

But how was it probable that these two numerals should be interchanged? Thus; if the upper stroke of the ל lamed were but a little impaired, as it frequently is both in MSS. and printed books, it might be very easily taken for ר resh, and the remains of the upper part of the lamed might be mistaken for the stroke over the ר, which makes it the character of two hundred.

But how could מֵאָתַיִם mathayim, two hundred, in the text, be put in the place of שְׁלוֹשִׁים sheloshim, thirty? Very easily, when the numbers became expressed by words at length instead of numeral letters.

The common reading of the text appears to me irreconcilable with truth; and I humbly hope that what I have offered above solves every difficulty, and fully accounts for all that the sacred historian speaks of this vain-comely lad.

**Ver. 27.** “Absalom had a daughter, whose name was Tamar.”

## CHAPTER 15

*Absalom conspires against his father, and uses various methods to seduce the people from their allegiance to their king, 14. Under pretense of paying a vow at Hebron, he obtains leave from David to go thither; and, by emissaries sent through the land, prepares the people for revolt, 7-11. He gains over Ahithophel, David's counsellor, 12. David is informed of the general defection of the people; on which he, and his life-guards and friends, leave the city, and go towards the wilderness, 13-18. The steadfast friendship of Ittai, the Gittite, 19-22. David's affecting departure from the city, 23. He sends Zadok and Abiathar with the ark back to Jerusalem, 24-29. He goes up Mount Olivet; prays that the counsel of Ahithophel may be turned into foolishness, 30-31. He desires Hushai to return to Jerusalem, and to send him word of all that occurs, 32-37.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1. *Absalom prepared him chariots and horses*** After all that has been said to prove that horses here mean horsemen, I think it most likely that the writer would have us to understand chariots drawn by horses; not by mules or such like cattle.

***Fifty men to run before him.*** Affecting in every respect the regal state by this establishment. Of this man Calmet collects the following character: "He was a bold, violent, revengeful, haughty, enterprising, magnificent, eloquent, and popular prince; he was also rich, ambitious, and vain of his personal accomplishments: after the death of Amnon, and his reconciliation to his father, he saw no hindrance in his way to the throne. He despised Solomon because of the meanness of his birth, and his tender years. He was himself of the blood royal, not only by his father David, but also by his mother Maacah, daughter to Talmai, king of Geshur: and, doubtless, in his own apprehension, of sufficient age, authority, and wisdom, to sustain the weight of government. There was properly now no competitor in his way: Amnon, David's first-born, was dead. Of Chileab, his second son by Abigail, we hear nothing; and Absalom was the third:

see 2 Samuel 3:2-5. He, therefore, seemed to stand nearest to the throne; but his sin was, that he sought it during his father's life, and endeavored to dethrone him in order to sit in his stead."

**Verse 6. *So Absalom stole the hearts*** His manner of doing this is circumstantially related above. He was thoroughly versed in the arts of the demagogue; and the common people, the vile mass, heard him gladly. He used the patriot's arguments, and was every thing of the kind, as far as promise could go. He found fault with men in power; and he only wanted their place, like all other pretended patriots, that he might act as they did, or worse.

**Verse 7. *After forty years*** There is no doubt that this reading is corrupt, though supported by the commonly printed Vulgate, the Septuagint, and the Chaldee. But the Syriac has (Syriac) arba shanin, FOUR years; the Arabic the same (Arabic) arba shinin, FOUR years; and Josephus has the same; so also the Sixtine edition of the Vulgate, and several MSS. of the same version. Theodoret also reads four, not forty; and most learned men are of opinion that ארבעים arbaim, FORTY, is an error for ארבע arba, FOUR; yet this reading is not supported by any Hebrew MS. yet discovered. But two of those collated by Dr. Kennicott have יום yom instead of שנה shanah, i.e., forty DAYS, instead of forty YEARS; and this is a reading more likely to be true than that in the commonly received text. We know that Absalom did stay THREE years with his grandfather at Geshur, 2 Samuel 13:38; and this probably was a year after his return: the era, therefore, may be the time of his slaying his brother Amnon; and the four years include the time from his flight till the conspiracy mentioned here.

**Verse 8. *While I abode at Geshur in Syria*** Geshur, the country of Talmai, was certainly not in Syria, but lay on the south of Canaan, in or near Edom, as is evident from Judges 1:10; 1 Samuel 27:8; 2 Samuel 13:37. Hence it is probable that ארם Aram, Syria, is a mistake for אדום Edom; ד dalet and ר resh being easily interchangeable. Edom is the reading both of the Syriac and Arabic.

***I will serve the Lord.*** Here he pretended to be a strict follower of Jehovah, even while he was in a heathen country; and now he desires liberty to go

and perform a vow at Hebron, which he pretends to have made while he was resident at Geshur. And all this was the more perfectly to organize his system of rebellion against his venerable father.

**Verse 10. *Absalom sent spies*** These persons were to go into every tribe; and the trumpet was to be blown as a signal for all to arise, and proclaim Absalom in every place. The trumpet was probably used as a kind of telegraph by the spies: trumpet exciting trumpet from place to place; so that, in a few minutes all Israel would hear the proclamation.

**Verse 11. *Went two hundred men*** These were probably soldiers, whom he supposed would be of considerable consequence to him. They had been seduced by his specious conduct, but knew nothing of his present design.

**Verse 12. *Sent for Ahithophel*** When Absalom got him, he in effect got the prime minister of the kingdom to join him.

**Verse 13. *The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.*** It is very difficult to account for this general defection of the people. Several reasons are given: 1. David was old or afflicted, and could not well attend to the administration of justice in the land. 2. It does appear that the king did not attend to the affairs of state, and that there were no properly appointed judges in the land; see 2 Samuel 15:3. 3. Joab's power was overgrown; he was wicked and insolent, oppressive to the people, and David was afraid to execute the laws against him. 4. There were still some partisans of the house of Saul, who thought the crown not fairly obtained by David. 6. David was under the displeasure of the Almighty, for his adultery with Bath-sheba, and his murder of Uriah; and God let his enemies loose against him. 6. There are always troublesome and disaffected men in every state, and under every government; who can never rest, and are ever hoping for something from a change. 7. Absalom appeared to be the real and was the undisputed heir to the throne; David could not, in the course of nature, live very long; and most people are more disposed to hail the beams of the rising, than exult in those of the setting, sun. No doubt some of these causes operated, and perhaps most of them exerted less or more influence in this most scandalous business.

**Verse 14. *David said-Arise-let us flee*** This, I believe, was the first time that David turned his back to his enemies. And why did he now flee?

Jerusalem, far from not being in a state to sustain a siege, was so strong that even the blind and the lame were supposed to be a sufficient defense for the walls, see 2 Samuel 5:6. And he had still with him his faithful Cherethites and Pelethites; besides six hundred faithful Gittites, who were perfectly willing to follow his fortunes. There does not appear any reason why such a person, in such circumstances, should not act on the defensive; at least till he should be fully satisfied of the real complexion of affairs. But he appears to take all as coming from the hand of God; therefore he humbles himself, weeps, goes barefoot, and covers his head! He does not even hasten his departure, for the habit of mourners is not the habit of those who are flying before the face of their enemies. He sees the storm, and he yields to what he conceives to be the tempest of the Almighty.

**Verse 17. *And tarried in a place*** He probably waited till he saw all his friends safely out of the city.

**Verse 19. *Thou art a stranger, and also an exile.*** Some suppose that Ittai was the son of Achish, king of Gath, who was very much attached to David, and banished from his father's court on that account. He and his six hundred men are generally supposed to have been proselytes to the Jewish religion.

**Verse 20. *Mercy and truth be with thee.*** May God ever show thee mercy, as thou showest it to me, and his truth ever preserve thee from error and delusion!

**Verse 23. *The brook Kidron*** This was an inconsiderable brook, and only furnished with water in winter, and in the rains. See John 18:1.

**Verse 24. *Bearing the ark*** The priests knew that God had given the kingdom to David; they had no evidence that he had deposed him: they therefore chose to accompany him, and take the ark, the object of their charge, with them.

**Verse 25. *Carry back the ark*** David shows here great confidence in God, and great humility. The ark was too precious to be exposed to the dangers of his migrations; he knew that God would restore him if he delighted in him, and he was not willing to carry off from the city of God that without which the public worship could not be carried on. He felt, therefore, more

for this public worship and the honor of God, than he did for his own personal safety.

**Verse 27. *Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace*** That is, As thou art the only organ of the public worship, that worship cannot be carried on without thee; and as thou art the priest of God, thou hast no cause to fear for thy personal safety: the nation has not abandoned their God, though they have abandoned their king. It appears also, that he wished these priests, by means of their sons, Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, to send him frequent intelligence of the motions and operations of the enemy.

**Verse 30. *Had his head covered*** This was not only the attitude of a mourner, but even of a culprit; they usually had their heads covered when condemned. See the case of Haman. When the king had pronounced his condemnation, they immediately covered his face, and led him out to punishment; Esther 7:8. See also Quintus Curtius, Deuteronomy Philota, cap. vi.: I, Lictor; caput obnubito.

**Verse 31. *Turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.*** Ahithophel was a wise man, and well versed in state affairs; and God alone could confound his devices.

**Verse 32. *Where he worshipped God*** Though in danger of his life, he stops on the top of Mount Olivet for prayer! How true is the adage, Prayer and provender never hinder any man's journey! Reader, dost thou do likewise?

***Hushai the Archite*** He was the particular friend of David, and was now greatly affected by his calamity.

**Verse 33. *Then thou shalt be a burden unto me.*** It appears that Hushai was not a warrior, but was a wise, prudent, and discreet man, who could well serve David by gaining him intelligence of Absalom's conspiracy; and he directs him to form a strict confederacy with the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and to make use of their sons as couriers between Jerusalem and David's place of retreat.



**Verse 37. *Absalom came into Jerusalem.*** It is very probable that he and his partisans were not far from the city when David left it, and this was one reason which caused him to hurry his departure.

READER, behold in the case of David a sad vicissitude of human affairs, and a fearful proof of their instability. Behold a king, the greatest that ever lived, a profound politician, an able general, a brave soldier, a poet of the most sublime genius and character, a prophet of the Most High God, and the deliverer of his country, driven from his dominions by his own son, abandoned by his fickle people, and for a time even by his God! See in his desolate state that there is none so exalted that God cannot abase, and none so abased that God cannot exalt. He was forsaken for a time, and his enemies triumphed; God returned, and his enemies were confounded. His crime, it is true, was great and God had declared by Nathan what had now come to pass. God is just, and in numberless instances sees right to show his displeasure even at those sins which his mercy has forgiven. In all cases it is a fearful and bitter thing to sin against the Lord.

## CHAPTER 16

*Ziba, servant of Mephibosheth, meets David with provisions, and by false insinuations obtains the grant of his masters property, 1-4. Shimei abuses and curses David, who restrains Abishai from slaying him, 5-14. Hushai makes a feigned tender of his services to Absalom, 15-19. Absalom calls a council and Ahithophel advises him to go in to his father's concubines, 20-22. Character of Ahithophel as a counselor, 23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 1. *Two hundred loaves of bread*** The word loaf gives us a false idea of the ancient Jewish bread; it was thin cakes, not yeasted and raised like ours.

***Bunches of raisins*** See on 1 Samuel 25:18.

***Summer fruits*** These were probably pumpions, cucumbers, or watermelons. The two latter are extensively used in those countries to refresh travelers in the burning heat of the summer. Mr. Harmer supposes they are called summer fruits on this very account.

***A bottle of wine.*** A goat's skin full of wine; this I have already shown was the general bottle in the Eastern countries; see on 1 Samuel 25:18.

**Verse 2. *The asses be for the king's household*** This is the Eastern method of speaking when any thing is presented to a great man: "This and this is for the slaves of the servants of your majesty," when at the same time the presents are intended for the sovereign himself, and are so understood. It is a high Eastern compliment: These presents are not worthy of your acceptance; they are only fit for the slaves of your slaves.

**Verse 3. *To-day shall the house of Israel*** What a base wretch was Ziba! and how unfounded was this accusation against the peaceable, loyal and innocent Mephibosheth!

**Verse 4. *Thine are all*** This conduct of David was very rash; he spoiled an honorable man to reward a villain, not giving himself time to look into the circumstances of the case. But David was in heavy afflictions, and these sometimes make even a wise man mad. Nothing should be done rashly; he who is in the habit of obeying the first impulse of his passions or feelings, will seldom do a right action, and never keep a clear conscience.

**Verse 5. *David came to Bahurim*** This place lay northward of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin. It is called Almon, Joshua 21:18; and Alemeth, 1 Chronicles 6:60. Bahurim signifies youths, and Almuth youth; so the names are of the same import.

***Cursed still as he came.*** Used imprecations and execrations.

**Verse 10. *Because the Lord hath said*** The particle וְכִי vechi should be translated for if, not because. FOR IF the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David, who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so!

**Verse 11. *Let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.*** No soul of man can suppose that ever God bade one man to curse another, much less that he commanded such a wretch as Shimei to curse such a man as David; but this is a peculiarity of the Hebrew language, which does not always distinguish between permission and commandment. Often the Scripture attributes to God what he only permits to be done; or what in the course of his providence he does not hinder. David, however, considers all this as being permitted of God for his chastisement and humiliation. I cannot withhold from my readers a very elegant poetic paraphrase of this passage, from the pen of the Rev. Charles Wesley, one of the first of Christian poets:—

*“Pure from the blood of Saul in vain,  
He dares not to the charge reply:  
Uriah’s doth the charge maintain,  
Uriah’s doth against him cry!*

*Let Shimei curse: the rod he bears  
For sins which mercy had forgiven:  
And in the wrongs of man reveres  
The awful righteousness of heaven.*

*Lord, I adore thy righteous will,  
Through every instrument of ill  
My Father's goodness see;  
Accept the complicated wrong*

*Of Shimei's hand and Shimei's tongue  
As kind rebukes from THEE."*

**Verse 15. *The men of Israel*** These words are wanting in the Chaldee, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic, and in two of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.

**Verse 18. *Whom the Lord and this people-choose*** Here is an equivocation; Hushai meant in his heart that God and all the people of Israel had chosen David; but he spake so as to make Absalom believe that he spoke of him: for whatever of insincerity may appear in this, Hushai is alone answerable. What he says afterwards may be understood in the same way.

**Verse 21. *Go in unto thy father's concubines*** It may be remembered that David left ten of them behind to take care of the house, see 2 Samuel 15:16. Ahithophel advised this infernal measure, in order to prevent the possibility of a reconciliation between David and his son; thus was the prophecy to Nathan fulfilled, 2 Samuel 12:11. And this was probably transacted in the very same place where David's eye took the adulterous view of Bath-sheba; see 2 Samuel 11:2.

The wives of the conquered king were always the property of the conqueror; and in possessing these, he appeared to possess the right to the kingdom. Herodotus informs us that Smerdis, having seized on the Persian throne after the death of Cambyses, espoused all the wives of his predecessor, lib. iii., c. 68. But for a son to take his father's wives was the sum of abomination, and was death by the law of God, Leviticus 20:11. This was a sin rarely found, even among the Gentiles.

Every part of the conduct of Absalom shows him to have been a most profligate young man; he was proud, vindictive, adulterous, incestuous, a parricide, and, in fine, reprobate to every good word and work. We still however recollect that David had grievously sinned, and we should also recollect that he suffered grievously for it; and that his humiliation,

repentance, and amendment, were most decisive and exemplary. Reader, God is as just as he is merciful.

## CHAPTER 17

*Ahithophel counsels Absalom to pursue his father with twelve thousand men, 14. Hushai gives a different counsel, and is followed, 5-14. Hushai informs Zadok and Abiathar; and they send word to David, 15-21. David and his men go beyond Jordan, 22. Ahithophel, finding his counsel slighted, goes home, sets his house in order, and hangs himself, 23. David moves to Mahanaim; and Absalom follows him over Jordan, 24-26. Several friends meet David at Mahanaim with refreshments and provisions, 27-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 1. *Let me now choose out twelve thousand men*** Had this counsel been followed, David and his little troop would soon have been destroyed; nothing but the miraculous interposition of God could have saved them. Twelve thousand chosen troops coming against him, in his totally unprepared state, would have soon settled the business of the kingdom. Ahithophel well saw that, this advice neglected, all was lost.

**Verse 3. *The man whom thou seekest is as if all returned*** Only secure David, and all Israel will be on thy side. He is the soul of the whole; destroy him, and all the rest will submit.

**Verse 8. *As a bear robbed of her whelps*** All wild beasts are very furious when robbed of their young; but we have some remarkable instances of the maternal affection of the bear in such circumstances; see one at the end of the chapter.

**Verse 13. *Shall all Israel bring ropes to that city*** The original word **חבלים** chabalim, which signifies ropes, and from which we have our word cable, may have some peculiarity of meaning here; for it is not likely that any city could be pulled down with ropes. The Chaldee, which should be best judge in this case, translates the original word by **משרי** mashreyan, towers: this gives an easy sense.

**Verse 17. *En-rogel*** The fullers' well; the place where they were accustomed to tread the clothes with their feet; hence the name **עֵין** ein, a well, and **רֶגֶל** regel, the foot, because of the treading above mentioned.

***And a wench went and told them*** The word wench occurs nowhere else in the Holy Scriptures: and, indeed, has no business here; as the Hebrew word **שִׁפְחָה** shipchah, should have been translated girl, maid, maid-servant. The word either comes from the Anglo-Saxon (A.S.) a maid, or the Belgic wunch, desire, a thing wished for: *multum enim ut plurimum Puellae a Juvenibus desiderantur, seu appetuntur*. So Minsheu. Junius seems more willing to derive it from wince, to frisk, to be skittish, etc., for reasons sufficiently obvious, and which he gives at length. After all, it may as likely come from the Gothic wens or weins, a word frequently used in the gospels of the Codex Argenteus for wife. Coverdale's Bible, 1535, has damsell. Becke's Bible, 1549, has wenche. The same in Cardmarden's Bible, 1566; but it is maid in Barker's Bible, 1615. Wench is more of a Scotticism than maid or damsel; and King James probably restored it, as he is said to have done *lad* in Genesis 21:12, and elsewhere. In every other place where the word occurs, our translators render it handmaid, bondmaid, maiden, womanservant, maidservant, and servant. Such is the latitude with which they translate the same Hebrew term in almost innumerable instances.

**Verse 23. *Put his household in order*** This self-murder could not be called lunacy, as every step to it was deliberate. He foresaw Absalom's ruin; and he did not choose to witness it, and share in the disgrace: and he could expect no mercy at the hands of David. He was a very bad man, and died an unprepared and accursed death.

**Verse 25. *Amasa captain of the host*** From the account in this verse, it appears that Joab and Amasa were sisters' children, and both nephews to David.

**Verse 28. *Brought beds*** These no doubt consisted in skins of beasts, mats, carpets, and such like things.

***Basons*** **סִפּוֹת** sappoth. Probably wooden bowls, such as the Arabs still use to eat out of, and to knead their bread in.

*Earthen vessels* כלי יוצר keley yotser. Probably clay vessels, baked in the sun. These were perhaps used for lifting water, and boiling those articles which required to be cooked.

*Wheat, and barley, etc.* There is no direct mention of flesh-meat here; little was eaten in that country, and it would not keep. Whether the sheep mentioned were brought for their flesh or their milk. I cannot tell.

According to Mr. Jones, “the Moors of west Barbary use the flour of parched barley, which is the chief provision they make for their journeys, and often use it at home; and this they carry in a leathern satchel.” These are ordinarily made of goat-skins. One of them now lies before me: it has been drawn off the animal before it was cut up; the places where the fore-legs, the tail, and the anus were, are elegantly closed, and have leathers thongs attached to them, by which it can be slung over the back of man, ass, or camel. The place of the neck is left open, with a running string to draw it up, purse-like, when necessary. The skin itself is tanned; and the upper side is curiously embroidered with red, black, blue, yellow, and flesh-coloured leather, in very curious and elegant forms and devices. Bags of this kind are used for carrying wine, water, milk, butter, grain, flour, clothes, and different articles of merchandise. This is, as I have before stated, the Scripture bottle. Mr. Jones farther says: “Travellers use zumeet, tumeet, and limerece. Zumeet is flour mixed with honey, butter, and spice; tumeet is flour done up with organ oil; and limerece is flour mixed with water for drink. This quenches the thirst much better than water alone; satisfies a hungry appetite; cools and refreshes tired and weary spirits; overcoming those ill effects which a hot sun and fatiguing journey might well occasion.”

This flour might be made of grain or pulse of any kind: and probably may be that which we here term parched corn and parched pulse; and in the forms above mentioned was well calculated, according to Mr. Jones’s account, for the people hungry, weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness. This was a timely supply for David and his men, and no doubt contributed much to the victory mentioned in the following chapter.

A REMARKABLE account of maternal affection in a she-bear: “In the year 1772, the Seahorse frigate and Carcass bomb, under the command of the Hon. Captain C. J. Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave, were sent on a



voyage of discovery to the north seas. In this expedition the late celebrated admiral Lord Nelson served as midshipman. While the Carcass lay locked in the ice, early one morning, the man at the masthead gave notice that three bears were making their way very fast over the frozen sea, and were directing their course towards the ship. They had no doubt been invited by the scent of some blubber of a seahorse that the crew had killed a few days before, which had been set on fire, and was burning on the ice at the time of their approach. They proved to be a she-bear and her two cubs, but the cubs were nearly as large as the dam. They ran eagerly to the fire, and drew out from the flames part of the flesh of the seahorse that remained unconsumed, and ate voraciously. The crew from the ship threw great lumps of flesh of the seahorse, which they had still left upon the ice, which the old bear fetched away singly, laid every lump before her cubs as she brought it, and dividing it, gave each a share, reserving but a small portion to herself. As she was fetching away the last piece, they levelled their muskets at the cubs, and shot them both dead; and in her retreat they wounded the dam, but not mortally. It would have drawn tears of pity from any but unfeeling minds, to have marked the affectionate concern expressed by this poor beast in the dying moments of her expiring young. Though she was sorely wounded, and could but just crawl to the place where they lay, she carried the lump of flesh she had fetched away, as she had done the others before, tore it in pieces and laid it down before them; and when she saw that they refused to eat, she laid her paws first upon one, and then upon the other, and endeavored to raise them up; all this while it was piteous to hear her moan. When she found she could not move them, she went off; and being at some distance, looked back and moaned. This not availing to entice them away, she returned, and smelling around them, began to lick their wounds. She went off a second time, as before; and having crawled a few paces, looked again behind her, and for some time stood moaning. But still her cubs not rising to follow her, she returned to them again, and with signs of inexpressible fondness went round one, and round the other, pawing them and moaning. Finding at last that they were cold and lifeless, she raised her head towards the ship, and growled a curse upon the murderers, which they returned with a volley of musket balls. She fell between her cubs, and died licking their wounds.”

Had this animal got among the destroyers of her young, she would have soon shown what was implied in the chafed mind of a bear robbed of her whelps.

## CHAPTER 18

*David reviews and arranges the people, and gives the command to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, 1, 2. On his expressing a desire to accompany them to the battle, they will not permit him, 3. He reviews them as they go out of the city, and gives commandment to the captains to save Absalom, 4, 5. They join battle with Absalom and his army, who are discomfited with the loss of twenty thousand men, 6-8. Absalom, fleeing away, is caught by his head in an oak; Joab finds him, and transfixes him with three darts, 9-15. The servants of David are recalled, and Absalom buried, 16-18. Ahimaaz and Cushie bring the tidings to David, who is greatly distressed at hearing of the death of Absalom, and makes bitter lamentation for him, 19-33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1.** *And set captains of thousands* By this time David's small company was greatly recruited; but what its number was we cannot tell. Josephus says it amounted to four thousand men. Others have supposed that they amounted to ten thousand; for thus they understand a clause in 2 Samuel 18:3, which they think should be read, We are now ten thousand strong.

**Verse 3.** *But now thou art worth ten thousand of us* The particle **אֵתָּה** attah, now, is doubtless a mistake for the pronoun **אַתָּה** attah, thou; and so it appears to have been read by the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Chaldee, and by two of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.

**Verse 5.** *Deal gently-with the young man* David was the father of this worthless young man; and is it to be wondered at that he feels as a father? Who in his circumstances, that had such feelings as every man should have, would have felt, or acted otherwise?

**Verse 7.** *Twenty thousand men.* Whether these were slain on the field of battle, or whether they were reckoned with those slain in the wood of Ephraim, we know not.

**Verse 8. *The wood devoured more people*** It is generally supposed that, when the army was broken, they betook themselves to the wood, fell into pits, swamps, etc., and, being entangled, were hewn down by David's men; but the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, state that they were devoured by wild beasts in the wood.

**Verse 9. *And his head caught hold of the oak*** It has been supposed that Absalom was caught by the hair, but no such thing is intimated in the text. Probably his neck was caught in the fork of a strong bough, and he was nearly dead when Joab found him; for it is said, 2 Samuel 18:14, he was yet alive, an expression which intimates he was nearly dead.

**Verse 10. *I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.*** He must have hung there a considerable time. this man saw him hanging; how long he had been hanging before he saw him, we cannot tell. He came and informed Joab; this must have taken up a considerable time. Joab went and pierced him through with three darts; this must have taken up still more time. It is therefore natural to conclude that his life must have been nearly gone after having been so long suspended, and probably was past recovery, even if Joab had taken him down.

**Verse 11. *And a girdle.*** The military belt was the chief ornament of a soldier, and was highly prized in all ancient nations; it was also a rich present from one chieftain to another. Jonathan gave his to David, as the highest pledge of his esteem and perpetual friendship, 1 Samuel 18:4. And Ajax gave his to Hector, as a token of the highest respect. — Hom. Il. vii., ver. 305.

**Verse 13. *Thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.*** This is a strong appeal to Joab's loyalty, and respect for the orders of David; but he was proof against every fine feeling, and against every generous sentiment.

**Verse 14. *I may not tarry thus with thee*** He had nothing to say in vindication of the purpose he had formed.

***Thrust them through the heart of Absalom*** He was determined to make sure work, and therefore he pierced his heart.

Joab should have obeyed the king's commandment: and yet the safety of the state required the sacrifice of Absalom. But independently of this, his

life was quadruply forfeited to the law:-1. In having murdered his brother Amnon. 2. In having excited an insurrection in the state. 3. In having taken up arms against his own father, Deuteronomy 21:18, 21. 4. In having lain with his father's concubines, Leviticus 18:29. Long ago he should have died by the hand of justice; and now all his crimes are visited on him in his last act of rebellion. Yet, in the present circumstances, Joab's act was base and disloyal, and a cowardly murder.

**Verse 15. *Ten young men smote Absalom and slew him.*** That is, they all pierced the body; but there could be no life in it after three darts had been thrust through the heart: but they added as much as would have killed him had he been alive.

**Verse 16. *Joab blew the trumpet*** He knew that the rebellion was now extinguished by the death of Absalom; and was not willing that any farther slaughter should be made of the deluded people.

**Verse 17. *And laid a very great heap of stones*** This was the method of burying heroes, and even traitors, the heap of stones being designed to perpetuate the memory of the event, whether good or bad. The ancient cairns or heaps of stones, in different parts of the world, are of this kind. The various tumuli or barrows in England are the same as the cairns in different parts of Ireland and Scotland. In the former, stones were not plenty; hence they heaped up great mounds of earth.

**Verse 18. *Reared up for himself a pillar*** There was a marble pillar in the time of Josephus called Absalom's pillar: and there is one shown to the present day under this name; but it is comparatively a modern structure.

***Absalom's place.*** Literally Absalom's HAND. See the note on 1 Samuel 15:12.

**Verse 21. *Tell the king what thou hast seen*** At this time the death of Absalom was not publicly known; but Joab had given Cushite private information of it. This Ahimaaz had not, for he could not tell the king whether Absalom were dead. To this Joab seems to refer, 2 Samuel 18:22: "Thou hast no tidings ready."

**Verse 24. *David sat between the two gates*** He was probably in the seat of justice. Before the gate of the city it is supposed there was an enclosure,

which had its gate also; David sat in the space between these two doors. Over the larger gate there appears to have been a turret, on which a sentinel or watchman stood continually, and gave information of what he saw in the country.

**Verse 25. *If he be alone, there is tidings*** That is, good tidings. For if the battle had been lost men would have been running in different directions through the country.

**Verse 29. *I saw a great tumult*** It was very probable that Ahimaaz did not know of the death of Absalom; he had seen the rout of his army, but did not know of his death. Others think he knew all, and told this untruth that he might not be the messenger of bad news to David.

**Verse 30. *Stand here.*** He intended to confront two messengers, and compare their accounts.

**Verse 32. *Is the young man Absalom safe?*** This was the utmost of his solicitude, and it well merited the reproof which Joab gave him, 2 Samuel 19:5.

**Verse 33. *O my son Absalom*** It is allowed by the most able critics that this lamentation is exceedingly pathetic. In what order the words were pronounced, for much depends on this, we cannot say. Perhaps it was the following:—

בני אבשלום בני Beni Abshalom, beni! My son Absalom! O my son!

בני אבשלום Beni Abshalom! O my son Absalom!

מי ית מותי אני תחתך Mi yitten muthi ani thachteicha. O that I had died in thy stead!

אבשלום בני בני Abshalom, beni! beni! O Absalom, my son, my son!

Is there no hope for the soul of this profligate young man? He died in his iniquity: but is it not possible that he implored the mercy of his Maker while he hung in the tree? And is it not possible that the mercy of God was extended to him? And was not that suspension a respite, to the end that he might have time to deprecate the wrath of Divine justice?

This is at least a charitable conjecture, and humanity will delight in such a case to lay hold even on possibilities. If there be any room for hope in such a death, who that knows the worth of an immortal soul, would not wish to indulge in it?

## CHAPTER 19

*David continues his lamentation for his son, and the people are greatly discouraged, 1-4. Joab reproves and threatens him with the general defection of the people, 5-7. David lays aside his mourning, and shows himself to the people, who are thereby encouraged, 8. The tribes take counsel to bring the king back to Jerusalem, 9-12. He makes Amasa captain of the host in place of Joab, 13. The king, returning, is met by Judah at Gilgal, 14, 15. Shimei comes to meet David, and entreats for his life, which David grants, 16-23. Mephibosheth also meets him, and shows how he had been slandered by Ziba, 24-30. David is met by Barzillai, and between them there is an affecting interview, 31-40. Contention between the men of Judah and the men of Israel, about bringing back the king, 41-43.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 2. *The victory-was turned into mourning*** Instead of rejoicing that a most unnatural and ruinous rebellion had been quashed, the people mourned over their own success, because they saw their king so immoderately afflicted for the loss of his worthless son.

**Verse 4. *The king covered his face*** This was the custom of mourners.

***O my son Absalom*** Calmet has properly remarked that the frequent repetition of the name of the defunct, is common in the language of



**Verse 5. *Thou hast shamed this day*** Joab's speech to David on his immoderate grief for the death of his rebellious son is not only remarkable for the insolence of office, but also for good sense and firmness. Every man who candidly considers the state of the case, must allow that David acted imprudently at least; and that Joab's firm reproof was necessary to arouse him to a sense of his duty to his people. But still, in his manner, Joab had far exceeded the bonds of that reverence which a servant owes to his master, or a subject to his prince. Joab was a good soldier, but in every respect a bad man, and a dangerous subject.

**Verse 8. *The king-sat in the gate.*** The place where justice was administered to the people.

**Verse 11. *Speak unto the elders of Judah*** David was afraid to fall out with this tribe: they were in possession of Jerusalem, and this was a city of great importance to him. They had joined Absalom in his rebellion; and doubtless were now ashamed of their conduct. David appears to take no notice of their infidelity, but rather to place confidence in them, that their confidence in him might be naturally excited: and, to oblige them yet farther, purposes to make Amasa captain of the host in the place of Joab.

**Verse 14. *And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah*** The measures that he pursued were the best calculated that could be to accomplish this salutary end. Appear to distrust those whom you have some reason to suspect, and you increase their caution and distrust. Put as much confidence in them as you safely can, and this will not fail to excite their confidence towards you.

**Verse 16. *Shimei the son of Gera*** It appears that Shimei was a powerful chieftain in the land; for he had here, in his retinue, no less than a thousand men.

**Verse 18. *There went over a ferry-boat*** This is the first mention of any thing of the kind. Some think a bridge or raft is what is here intended.

**Verse 20. *For thy servant doth know that I have sinned*** This was all he could do; his subsequent conduct alone could prove his sincerity. On such an avowal as this David could not but grant him his life.

**Verse 24. *Neither dressed his feet*** He had given the fullest proof of his sincere attachment to David and his cause; and by what he had done, amply refuted the calumnies of his servant Ziba.

**Verse 27. *The king is as an angel of God*** As if he had said, I state my case plainly and without guile; thou art too wise not to penetrate the motives from which both myself and servant have acted. I shall make no appeal; with whatsoever thou determinest I shall rest contented.

**Verse 29. *I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.*** At first, David gave the land of Saul to Mephibosheth; and Ziba, his sons, and his servants, were to work that land; and to Mephibosheth, as the lord, he was to give the half of the produce. Ziba met David in his distress with provisions, and calumniated Mephibosheth: David, too slightly trusting to his misrepresentation, and supposing that Mephibosheth was actually such a traitor as Ziba represented him, made him on the spot a grant of his master's land. Now he finds that he has acted too rashly, and therefore confirms the former grant; i.e. that Ziba should cultivate the ground, and still continue to give to Mephibosheth, as the lord, the half of the produce. This was merely placing things in statu quo, and utterly annulling the gift that he had made to Ziba. But why did he leave this treacherous man any thing? Answer, 1. He was one of the domestics of Saul, and David wished to show kindness to that house. 2. He had supplied him with the necessaries of life when he was in the greatest distress; and he thinks proper to continue him in his old office, by way of remuneration. But it was certainly too great a compensation for his services, however then important, when all the circumstances are considered.

**Verse 32. *Barzillai was a very aged man*** This venerable person had given full proof of his attachment to David by the supplies he had given him when he lay at Mahanaim, where his case was all but desperate; the sincerity of his congratulations now none can suspect. David's offer to him was at once noble and liberal: he wished to compensate such a man, and he wished to have at hand such a friend.

**Verse 35. *Can thy servant taste what I eat*** Here is at once an affecting description of the infirmities of old age; and a correct account of the mode of living at an Eastern court in ancient times.

Barzillai was fourscore years old; his ear was become dull of hearing, and his relish for his food was gone: he therefore appears to have been not only an old man, but an infirm old man. Besides delicate meats and drinks, we find that vocal music constituted a principal part of court entertainments: male and female singers made a necessary appendage to these banquets, as they do in most Eastern courts to the present day. As David was a most sublime poet, and emphatically styled the sweet singer of Israel, he no doubt had his court well supplied with vocal as well as instrumental performers; and, probably, with poets and poetesses; for it is not likely that he was the only poet of his time, though he undoubtedly was the most excellent.

**Verse 37. *Thy servant Chimham*** It is generally understood that this was Barzillai's son; and this is probable from 1 Kings 2:7, where, when David was dying, he said, Show kindness to the sons of Barzillai: and it is very probable that this Chimham was one of them. In Jeremiah 41:17 mention is made of the habitation of Chimham, which was near to Bethlehem; and it is reasonably conjectured that David had left that portion, which was probably a part of his paternal estate, to this son of Barzillai.

**Verse 39. *The king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him*** The kiss was the token of friendship and farewell; the blessing was a prayer to God for his prosperity, probably a prophetic benediction.

**Verse 42. *Wherefore then be ye angry for this matter?*** We have not done this for our own advantage; we have gained nothing by it; we did it through loyal attachment to our king.

**Verse 43. *We have ten parts in the king, and more right*** We are ten tribes to one, or we are ten times so many as you; and consequently should have been consulted in this business.

***The words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.*** They had more weight, for they had more reason on their side.

It is pleasant when every province, canton, district, and county, vie with each other in personal attachment to the prince, and loyal attachment to his government. From such contentions as these civil wars are never likely to arise. And how blessed it must be for the country where the king merits

all this! where the prince is the pastor and father of his people, and in all things the minister of and to them for good!

It is criminal in the prince not to endeavor to deserve the confidence and love of his people; and it is highly criminal in the people not to repay such endeavors with the most loyal and affectionate attachment.

Where the government is not despotic, the king acts by the counsels of his ministers, and while he does so he is not chargeable with miscarriages and misfortunes; they either came through bad counsels, or directly thwarting providences. On this ground is that political maxim in our laws formed, the king can do no wrong. Sometimes God will have things otherwise than the best counsels have determined, because he sees that the results will, on the whole, be better for the peace and prosperity of that state. "God is the only Ruler of princes." And as the peace of the world depends much on civil government, hence kings and civil governors are peculiar objects of the Almighty's care. Wo to him who labors to bring about a general disaffection; as such things almost invariably end in general disappointment and calamity. It is much easier to unsettle than to settle; to pull down than to build up.

## CHAPTER 20

*Sheba raises an insurrection, and gains a party in Israel, 1, 2. David shuts up the ten concubines who were defiled by Absalom, 3. Amasa is sent to assemble the men of Judah, 4, 5. And in the mean time Abishai is sent to pursue Sheba, 6, 7. Joab treacherously murders Amasa, 8-12. Joab and the army continue the pursuit of Sheba, 13, 14. He is besieged in Abel; and, by the counsels of a wise woman, the people of Abel cut off his head, and throw it over the wall to Joab; who blows the trumpet of peace, and he and his men return to Jerusalem, 15-22. Account of David's civil and military officers, 23-26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 1. *Sheba, the son of Bichri*** As this man was a Benjamite, he probably belonged to the family of Saul; and he seems to have had considerable influence in Israel to raise such an insurrection: but we know nothing farther of him than what is related in this place.

***We have no part in David*** We of Israel, we of the ten tribes, are under no obligation to the house of David. Leave him, and let every man fall into the ranks under his own leader.

**Verse 3. *The ten women*** He could not well divorce them; he could not punish them, as they were not in the transgression; he could no more be familiar with them, because they had been defiled by his son; and to have married them to other men might have been dangerous to the state: therefore he shut them up and fed them-made them quite comfortable, and they continued as widows to their death.

**Verse 4. *Then said the king to Amasa*** Thus he invests him with the command of the army, and sends him to collect the men of Judah, and to come back to receive his orders in relation to Sheba, in three days. It appears that Amasa found more difficulty in collecting his country-men than was at first supposed; and this detaining him beyond the three days,

David, fearing that Sheba's rebellion would get head, sent Abishai, who it appears was accompanied by Joab, to pursue after Sheba.

Amasa, it seems, got up with them at Gibeon, 2 Samuel 20:8, where he was treacherously murdered by the execrable Joab.

**Verse 8. *Joab's garment*** It appears that this was not a military garment; and that Joab had no arms but a short sword, which he had concealed in his girdle; and this sword, or knife, was so loose in its sheath that it could be easily drawn out. It is thought farther, that Joab, in passing to Amasa, stumbled, (for so some of the versions, and able critics, understand the words it fell out.) and that the sword fell down when he stumbled; that he took it up with his left hand as if he had no bad intention; and then, taking Amasa by the beard with his right hand, pretending to kiss him, he, with his sword in his left hand, ripped up his bowels. This seems to be the meaning of this very obscure verse. It is worthy of remark that in the Eastern country it is the beard, not the man, which is usually kissed.

**Verse 10. *In the fifth rib*** I believe **חֹמֶשׁ** chomesh, which we render here and elsewhere the fifth rib, means any part of the abdominal region. The Septuagint translate it **την ψοαν**, the groin; the Targum, the right side of the thigh, i.e., (the phrase of the Targumist being interpreted,) the privy parts. That it means some part of the abdominal region, is evident from what follows, And shed out his bowels to the ground. It appears from this that, in plain English, he ripped up his belly.

**Verse 11. *He that favoureth Joab*** As if he had said, There is now no other commander besides Joab; and Joab is steadily attached to David: let those therefore who are loyal follow Joab.

**Verse 12. *Amasa wallowed in blood*** It is very likely that Amasa did not immediately die; I have known instances of persons living several hours after their bowels had been shed out.

**Verse 14. *Unto Abel*** This is supposed to have been the capital of the district called Abilene in St. Luke's Gospel, Luke 3:1.

***Beth-maachah*** Is supposed to have been in the northern part of the Holy Land, on the confines of Syria, and probably in the tribe of Naphtali.

**Verse 15. *They cast up a bank against the city*** The word סִלְלָה solelah, which we render bank, means, most probably, a battering engine of some kind, or a tower overlooking the walls, on which archers and slingers could stand and annoy the inhabitants, while others of the besiegers could proceed to sap the walls. That it cannot be a bank that stood in the trench, is evident from the circumstance thus expressed.

**Verse 16. *A wise woman*** She was probably governess.

**Verse 18. *They shall surely ask counsel at Abel*** This is a proverb, but from what it originated we know not; nor can we exactly say what it means: much must be supplied to bring it to speak sense. Abel was probably famed for the wisdom of its inhabitants; and parties who had disputes appealed to their judgment, which appears to have been in such high reputation as to be final by consent of all parties. To this the wise woman refers, and intimates to Joab that he should have proceeded in this way before he began to storm the city, and destroy the peaceable inhabitants.

**Verse 19. *I-peaceable and faithful in Israel*** I am for peace, not contention of any kind; I am faithful-I adhere to David, and neither seek nor shall sanction any rebellion or anarchy in the land. Why then dost thou proceed in such a violent manner? Perhaps the woman speaks here in the name and on behalf of the city: "I am a peaceable city, and am faithful to the king."

***A mother in Israel*** That is, a chief city of a district; for it is very likely that the woman speaks of the city, not of herself.

**Verse 21. *His head shall be thrown to thee*** Thus it appears she had great sway in the counsels of the city; and that the punishment of a state rebel was then, what it is now in this kingdom, beheading.

**Verse 23. *Joab was over all the host*** He had murdered Amasa, and seized on the supreme command: and such was his power at present, and the service which he had rendered to the state by quelling the rebellion of Sheba, that David was obliged to continue him; and dared not to call him to account for his murders without endangering the safety of the state by a civil war.

***Benaiah-over the Cherethites*** Benaiah was over the archers and slingers. See the notes on 2 Samuel 8:18.

**Verse 24. *Adoram was over the tribute*** Probably the chief receiver of the taxes; or Chancellor of the Exchequer, as we term it.

***Jehoshaphat-recorder*** The registrar of public events.

**Verse 25. *Shevah was scribe*** The king's secretary.

**Verse 26. *Ira-was a chief ruler about David.*** The Hebrew is כהן לדוד cohen ledavid, a priest to David; and so the Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic. The Chaldee has רב rab, a prince, or chief. He was probably a sort of domestic chaplain to the king. We know that the kings of Judah had their seers, which is nearly the same: Gad was David's seer, 2 Samuel 24:11, and Jeduthun was the seer of King Josiah, 2 Chronicles 35:16.

The conclusion of this chapter is very similar to the conclusion of 2 Samuel 8:16-18, where see the notes.



## CHAPTER 21

*A famine taking place three successive years in Israel, David inquired of the Lord the cause; and was informed that it was on account of Saul and his bloody house, who had slain the Gibeonites, 1. David inquires of the Gibeonites what atonement they require, and they answer, seven sons of Saul, that they may hang them up in Gibeah, 2-6. Names of the seven sons thus given up, 7-9. Affecting account of Rizpah, who watched the bodies through the whole of the time of harvest, to prevent them from being devoured by birds and beasts of prey, 10. David is informed of Rizpah's conduct, and collects the bones of Saul, Jonathan, and the seven men that were hanged at Gibeah, and buries them; and God is entreated for the land, 11-14. War between the Israelites and Philistines, in which David is in danger of being slain by Ishbi-benob, but is succoured by Abishai, 15-17. He, and several gigantic Philistines, are slain by David and his servants, 18-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 1. *Then there was a famine*** Of this famine we know nothing; it is not mentioned in any part of the history of David.

***Because he slew the Gibeonites.*** No such fact is mentioned in the life and transactions of Saul; nor is there any reference to it in any other part of Scripture.

**Verse 2. *The remnant of the Amorites*** The Gibeonites were Hivites, not Amorites, as appears from Joshua 11:19: but Amorites is a name often given to the Canaanites in general, Genesis 15:16; Amos 2:9, and elsewhere.

**Verse 3. *Wherewith shall I make the atonement*** It is very strange that a choice of this kind should be left to such a people. Why not ask this of God himself?

**Verse 6. *Seven men of his sons*** Meaning sons, grandsons, or other near branches of his family. It is supposed that the persons chosen were principal in assisting Saul to exterminate the Gibeonites. But where is the proof of this?

**Verse 8. *Five sons of Michal-whom she brought up*** Michal, Saul's daughter, was never married to Adriel, but to David, and afterwards to Phaltiel; though it is here said she bore יָלְדָה yaledah, not brought up, as we falsely translate it: but we learn from 1 Samuel 18:19, that Merab, one of Saul's daughters, was married to Adriel.

Two of Dr. Kennicott's MSS. have Merab, not Michal; the Syriac and Arabic have Nadab; the Chaldee has properly Merab; but it renders the passage thus:-And the five sons of Merab which Michal the daughter of Saul brought up, which she brought forth to Adriel the son of Barzillai. This cuts the knot.

**Verse 9. *In the beginning of barley harvest.*** This happened in Judea about the vernal equinox, or the 21st of March.

**Verse 10. *Rizpah-took sackcloth*** Who can read the account of Rizpah's maternal affection for her sons that were now hanged, without feeling his mind deeply impressed with sorrows?

Did God require this sacrifice of Saul's sons, probably all innocent of the alleged crime of their father? Was there no other method of averting the Divine displeasure? Was the requisition of the Gibeonites to have Saul's sons sacrificed to God, to be considered as an oracle of God? Certainly not; God will not have man's blood for sacrifice, no more than he will have swine's blood. The famine might have been removed, and the land properly purged, by offering the sacrifices prescribed by the law, and by a general humiliation of the people.

***Until water dropped upon them*** Until the time of the autumnal rains, which in that country commence about October. Is it possible that this poor broken-hearted woman could have endured the fatigue, (and probably in the open air,) of watching these bodies for more than five months? Some think that the rain dropping on them out of heaven means the removal of the famine which was occasioned by drought, by now sending rain, which might have been shortly after these men were hanged; but this by no means

agrees with the manner in which the account is introduced: “They were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest. And Rizpah-took sackcloth, and spread it for her on the rock, from the beginning of harvest, until water dropped upon them out of heaven.” No casual or immediately providential rain can be here intended; the reference must be to the periodical rains above mentioned.

**Verse 12. *Took the bones of Saul*** The reader will recollect that the men of Jabesh-gilead burned the bodies of Saul and his sons, and buried the remaining bones under a tree at Jabesh. See 1 Samuel 31:12, 13. These David might have dugged up again, in order to bury them in the family sepulcher.

**Verse 15. *Moreover the Philistines had yet war*** There is no mention of this war in the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 20:4, etc.

***David waxed faint.*** This circumstance is nowhere else mentioned.

**Verse 16. *Being girded with a new sword*** As the word sword is not in the original, we may apply the term new to his armor in general; he had got new arms, a new coat of mail, or something that defended him well, and rendered him very formidable: or it may mean a strong or sharp sword.

**Verse 17. *That thou quench not the light of Israel.*** David is here considered as the lamp by which all Israel was guided, and without whom all the nation must be involved in darkness. The lamp is the emblem of direction and support. Light is used in this sense by Homer:—

ουδε τι πατροκλω γενομην φαιος, αυδ' εταροισι  
τοις αλλοις, οι δη πολεες δαμην εκτορι διω.

Iliad, lib. xviii. ver. 102.

“I have neither been a LIGHT to Patroclus  
nor to his companions, who have been slain by  
the noble Hector.”

**Verse 18. *A battle-at Gob*** Instead of Gob, several editions, and about forty of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS., have nob; but Gezer is the name in the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 20:4.

**Verse 19. *Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim-slew-Goliath the Gittite***

Here is a most manifest corruption of the text, or gross mistake of the transcriber; David, not Elhanan, slew Goliath. In 1 Chronicles 20:5, the parallel place, it stands thus: “Elhanan, the son of Jair, slew Lahmi, the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear-staff was like a weaver’s beam.” This is plain; and our translators have borrowed some words from Chronicles to make both texts agree. The corruption may be easily accounted for by considering that ארגים *oregim*, which signifies weavers, has slipped out of one line into the other; and that בית הלחמי *beith hallachmi*, the Beth-lehemite, is corrupted from את לחמי *eth Lachmi*; then the reading will be the same as in Chronicles. Dr. Kennicott has made this appear very plain in his First Dissertation on the Hebrew Text, p. 78, etc.

**Verse 20. *On every hand six fingers*** This is not a solitary instance: Tavernier informs us that the eldest son of the emperor of Java, who reigned in 1648, had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot. And Maupertuis, in his seventeenth letter, says that he met with two families near Berlin, where sedigitism was equally transmitted on both sides of father and mother. I saw once a young girl, in the county of Londonderry, in Ireland, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, but her stature had nothing gigantic in it. The daughters of Caius Horatius, of patrician dignity, were called sedigitae, because they had six fingers on each hand. Volcatius, a poet, was called sedigitus for the same reason. See Pliny’s Hist. Nat., lib. xi., cap. 43.

THERE are evidently many places in this chapter in which the text has suffered much from the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers; and indeed I suspect the whole has suffered so materially as to distort, if not misrepresent the principal facts. It seems as if a Gibeonite has had something to do with the copies that are come down to us, or that the first fourteen verses have been inserted from a less authentic document than the rest of the book. I shall notice some of the most unaccountable, and apparently exceptionable particulars:—

1. The famine, 2 Samuel 21:1, is not spoken of anywhere else, nor at all referred to in the books of Kings or Chronicles; and, being of three years’ duration, it was too remarkable to be omitted in the history of David.

2. The circumstance of Saul's attempt to exterminate the Gibeonites is nowhere else mentioned; and, had it taken place, it is not likely it would have been passed over in the history of Saul's transgressions. Indeed, it would have been such a breach of the good faith by which the whole nation was bound to this people, that an attempt of the kind could scarcely have failed to raise an insurrection through all Israel.

3. The wish of David that the Gibeonites, little better than a heathenish people, should bless the inheritance of the Lord, is unconstitutional and unlikely.

4. That God should leave the choice of the atonement to such a people, or indeed to any people, seems contrary to his established laws and particular providence.

5. That he should require seven innocent men to be hung up in place of their offending father, in whose iniquity they most likely never had a share, seems inconsistent with justice and mercy.

6. In 2 Samuel 21:8, there is mention made of five sons of Michal, which she bore (יָלְדָהּ yaledah) unto Adriel. Now, 1. Michal was never the wife of Adriel, but of David and Phaltiel. 2. She never appears to have had any children, see 2 Samuel 6:23; this I have been obliged to correct in the preceding notes by putting Merab in the place of Michal.

7. The seven sons of Saul, mentioned here, are represented as a sacrifice required by God, to make an atonement for the sin of Saul. Does God in any case require human blood for sacrifice? And is it not such a sacrifice that is represented here? Dr. Delaney and others imagine that these seven sons were principal agents in the execution of their father's purpose; but of this there is no proof. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, certainly had no hand in this projected massacre, he was ever lame, and could not be so employed; and yet he would have been one of the seven had it not been for the covenant made before with his father: But the king spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan-because of the Lord's oath that was between them, 2 Samuel 21:7.

8. The circumstance of Rizpah's watching the bodies of those victims, upon a rock, and probably in the open air, both day and night, from March

to October, or even for a much less period, is, as it is here related, very extraordinary and improbable.

9. The hanging the bodies so long was against an express law of God, which ordained that those who were hanged on a tree should be taken down before sunset, and buried the same day, lest the land should be defiled, (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23.) Therefore, 1. God did not command a breach of his own law. 2. David was too exact an observer of that law to require it. 3. The people could not have endured it; for, in that sultry season, the land would indeed have been defiled by the putrefaction of the dead bodies; and this would, in all likelihood, have added pestilence to famine.

10. The story of collecting and burying the bones of Saul and Jonathan is not very likely, considering that the men of Jabesh-gilead had burned their bodies, and buried the remaining bones under a tree at Jabesh, 1 Samuel 31:12, 13; yet still it is possible.

11. Josephus takes as much of this story as he thinks proper, but says not one word about Rizpah, and her long watching over her slaughtered sons.

12. Even the facts in this chapter, which are mentioned in other places, (see 1 Chronicles 20:4, etc.,) are greatly distorted and corrupted; for we have already seen that Elhanan is made here to kill Goliath the Gittite, whom it is well known David slew; and it is only by means of the parallel place above that we can restore this to historical truth.

That there have been attempts to remove some of these objections, I know; and I know also that these attempts have been in general without success.

Till I get farther light on the subject, I am led to conclude that the whole chapter is not now what it would be, coming from the pen of an inspired writer; and that this part of the Jewish records has suffered much from rabbinical glosses, alterations, and additions. The law, the prophets, and the hagiographa, including Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, etc., have been ever considered as possessing the highest title to Divine inspiration; and therefore have been most carefully preserved and transcribed; but the historical books, especially Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, have not ranked so high, have been less carefully preserved, and have been the subjects of

frequent alteration and corruption. Yet still the great foundation of God standeth sure and is sufficiently attested by his own broad seal of consistency, truth, and holiness.

## CHAPTER 22

*David's psalm of thanksgiving for God's powerful deliverance and manifold blessings, including prophetic declarations relative to the humiliation and exaltation of the Messiah, 1-51.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22

**Verse 1.** *David spake unto the Lord the words of this song* This is the same in substance, and almost in words, with Psalm 18:1-50, and therefore the exposition of it must be reserved till it occurs in its course in that book, with the exception of a very few observations, and Dr. Kennicott's general view of the subject.

**Verse 5.** *When the waves of death compassed me* Though in a primary sense many of these things belong to David, yet generally and fully they belong to the Messiah alone.

**Verse 11.** *He rode upon a cherub, and did fly-he was seen upon the things of the wind.* In the original of this sublime passage, sense and sound are astonishingly well connected. I shall insert the Hebrew, represent it in English letters for the sake of the unlearned reader, and have only to observe, he must read from the right to the left.

וַיִּרְכַּב עַל כְּרוּב וַיֵּעַף וַיִּרְא עַל כַּנְּפֵי רוּחַ ruach canphey al vaiyera  
:vaiyaoph kerub al vayirkab wind the of wings the upon seen was he and  
:fly did cherub a upon rode he

The clap of the wing, the agitation and rush through the air are expressed here in a very extraordinary manner.

Other beauties of this kind will be noted in the exposition of the Psalm alluded to above.

I now subjoin Dr. Kennicott's remarks on this chapter:—

“The very sublime poetry contained in this chapter is universally admired, and yet it cannot be perfectly understood, till it is known WHO is the



speaker, who the person thus triumphant over mighty enemies, whose SUFFERINGS occasioned such a dreadful convulsion of nature, and, who, upon his deliverance, inflicted such vengeance on his own people, and also became thus a king over the heathen. Should we be told that this person was David, it will be very difficult to show how this description can possibly agree with that character: but if it did in fact agree, yet would it contradict St. Paul, who quotes part of it as predicting the conversion of the Gentiles under Christ the Messiah. Romans 15:9; Hebrews 2:13; and see Peirce's Commentary, p. 50. Now if the person represented as speaking through this Divine ode be David only, the Messiah is excluded. In consequence of the difficulties resulting from each of these suppositions, the general idea has been that it relates both to David and to the Messiah as a prophecy of a double sense; first, as spoken by David of himself, and yet to be understood in a secondary sense, of the Messiah. But it must be remarked here, that if spoken only of David, it is not a prediction of any thing future, but a thanksgiving for favors past, and therefore is no prophecy at all. And farther, it could not be a prophecy descriptive of David unless the particulars agreed to David, which they evidently do not. If then David be here necessarily excluded from the single sense, he must be excluded also from the double sense, because nothing can be intended by any sacred writer, to relate to two persons, unless it be TRUE of both; but it not being the case here as to David, we must conclude that this song relates only to the Messiah; and on this subject an excellent Dissertation, by the late Mr. Peirce, is subjoined to his comment on the Epistle to the Hebrews. It may be necessary to add here two remarks: the twenty-fourth verse now ends with, I have kept myself from mine iniquity, which words, it is objected, are not proper, if applied to the Messiah. But this difficulty is removed, in part, by the context, which represents the speaker as perfectly innocent and righteous; and this exactly agrees with the proof arising from the Syriac and Arabic versions, and also the Chaldee paraphrase, that this word was anciently מְעוֹנִי ab iniquitatibus; consequently, this is one of the many instances where the final mem is improperly omitted by the Jewish transcribers. See my General Dissertation, p. 12. Lastly, the difficulty arising from the title, which ascribes the Psalm to David, and which seems to make him the speaker in it, may be removed, either by supposing that the title here, like those now prefixed to several Psalms, is of no sufficient authority; or

rather, by considering this title as only meant to describe the time when David composed this prophetic hymn, that when delivered from all his other enemies as well as from the hand of Saul, he then consecrated his leisure by composing this sublime prophecy concerning MESSIAH, his son, whom he represents here as speaking, (just as in Psalm 22, 40, and other places,) and as describing, 1. His triumph over death and hell; 2. The manifestations of Omnipotence in his favor, earth and heaven, trembling at God's awful presence; 3. The speaker's innocence thus divinely attested; 4. The vengeance he was to take on his own people the Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem; and, 5. The adoption of the heathen, over whom he was to be the head and ruler.

“Another instance of a title denoting only the time of a prophecy, occurs in the very next chapter; where a prophecy concerning the Messiah is entitled, The LAST words of David; i.e., a hymn which he composed a little before his death, after all his other prophecies. And perhaps this ode in 2 Samuel 22, which immediately precedes that in 2 Samuel 23, was composed but a little while before; namely, when all his wars were over. Let it be added, that Josephus, immediately before he speaks of David's mighty men, which follow in this same chapter of Samuel, considers the two hymns in 2 Samuel 22 and 23, as both written after his wars were over—*Jam Davides, bellis et periculis perfunctus, pacemque deinceps profundam agitans, odas in Deum hymnosque composuit.* Tom. i., page 401.”

## CHAPTER 23

*The last words of David, 1-7. The names and exploits of his thirty-seven worthies, 8-39.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 23

**Verse 1. *These be the last words of David.*** I suppose the last poetical composition is here intended. He might have spoken many words after these in prose, but none in verse. Other meanings are given; this I prefer.

The words of this song contain a glorious prediction of the Messiah's kingdom and conquests, in highly poetic language.

***The sweet psalmist of Israel*** This character not only belonged to him as the finest poet in Israel, but as the finest and most Divine poet of the whole Christian world. The sweet psalmist of Israel has been the sweet psalmist of every part of the habitable world, where religion and piety have been held in reverence.

**Verse 2. *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me*** Hence the matter of his writing came by direct and immediate inspiration.

***His word was in my tongue.*** Hence the words of this writing were as directly inspired as the matter.

**Verse 3. *The Rock of Israel*** The Fountain whence Israel was derived.

***He that ruleth over men must be just*** More literally, צדיק מושל באדם moshel baadam tsaddik, He that ruleth in man is the just one; or, The just one is the ruler among men.

***Ruling in the fear of God.*** It is by God's fear that Jesus Christ rules the hearts of all his followers; and he who has not the fear of God before his eyes, can never be a Christian.

**Verse 4. *He shall be as the light of the morning*** This verse is very obscure, for it does not appear from it who the person is of whom the

prophet speaks. As the Messiah seems to be the whole subject of these last words of David, he is probably the person intended. One of Dr. Kennicott's MSS. Supplies the word יהוה 'Yehovah; and he therefore translates, As the light of the morning ariseth Jehovah (see below) He shall be the Sun of righteousness, bringing salvation in his rays, and shining-illuminating the children of men, with increasing splendor, as long as the sun and moon endure.

*As the tender grass* The effects of this shining, and of the rays of his grace, shall be like the shining of the sun upon the young grass or corn, after a plentiful shower of rain.

**Verse 5. *Although my house be not so with God*** Instead of כן ken, so, read כן kun, established; and let the whole verse be considered as an interrogation, including a positive assertion; and the sense will be at once clear and consistent: "for is not my house (family) established with God; because he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all, and preserved? For this (He) is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it (or him) not to spring up." All is sure relative to my spiritual successor, though he do not as yet appear; the covenant is firm, and it will spring forth in due time. See the observations at the end of the chapter.

**Verse 6. *But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns*** There is no word in the text for sons; it is simply Belial, the good-for-nothing man, and may here refer-first to Saul, and secondly to the enemies of our Lord.

*As thorns thrust away* A metaphor taken from hedging; the workman thrusts the thorns aside either with his bill or hand, protected by his impenetrable mitten or glove, till, getting a fair blow at the roots, he cuts them all down. The man is fenced with iron, and the handle of his bill is like the staff of a spear. This is a good representation of the dubbing-bill, with which they slash the thorn hedge on each side before they level the tops by the pruning-shears. The handle is five or six feet long. This is a perfectly natural and intelligible image.

**Verse 8. *These be the names of the mighty men*** This chapter should be collated with the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 11:11-47; and see Kennicott's First Dissertation on the printed Hebrew text, pages 64-471.

**The Tachmonite that sat in the seat** Literally and properly, Jashobeam the Hachmonite. See 1 Chronicles 11:11.

**The same was Adino the Eznite** This is a corruption for he lift up his spear. See 1 Chronicles 11:11.

**Eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.** THREE hundred is the reading in Chronicles, and seems to be the true one. The word חָלַל *chalal*, which we translate slain, should probably be translated soldiers, as in the Septuagint, *στρατιώτας*; he withstood three hundred SOLDIERS at one time. See the note on David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, 2 Samuel 1:21, and Kennicott's First Dissertation, p. 101. Dr. Kennicott observes: "This one verse contains three great corruptions in the Hebrew text: 1. The proper name of the hero Jashobeam is turned into two common words, rendered, that sat in the seat. 2. The words, he lift up his spear, הוא עורר את חניתו *hu orer eth chanitho*, are turned into two proper names wholly inadmissible here: העצני הוא עדינו *hu Adino haetsni*, he was Adino the Eznite; it being nearly as absurd to say that Jashobeam the Hachmonite was the same with Adino the Eznite, as that David the Beth-lehemite was the same with Elijah the Tishbite. 3. The number eight hundred was probably at first three hundred, as in 1 Chronicles 11:11." See Kennicott, *ubi supr.*

**Verse 9. When they defied the Philistines that were there gathered** This is supposed to refer to the war in which David slew Goliath.

**Verse 11. A piece of ground full of lentiles** In 1 Chronicles 11:13 it is a parcel of ground full of barley. There is probably a mistake of עדשים *adashim*, lentiles, for שעורים *seorim*, barley, or vice versa. Some think there were both lentiles and barley in the field, and that a marauding party of the Philistines came to destroy or carry them off, and these worthies defeated the whole, and saved the produce of the field. This is not unlikely.

**Verse 13. And three of the thirty** The word שלשים *shalishim*, which we translate thirty, probably signifies an office or particular description of men. Of these shalishim we have here thirty-seven, and it can scarcely be said with propriety that we have thirty-seven out of thirty; and besides, in

the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 11:11-47, there are sixteen added. The captains over Pharaoh's chariots are termed שלשים shalishim, Exodus 14:7.

***The Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.*** This is the same war which is spoken of 2 Samuel 5:17, etc.

**Verse 15. *The water of the well of Bethlehem*** This was David's city, and he knew the excellence of the water which was there; and being near the place, and parched with thirst, it was natural for him to wish for a draught of water out of that well. These three heroes having heard it, though they received no command from David, broke through a company of the Philistines, and brought away some of the water. When brought to David he refused to drink it: for as the men got it at the hazard of their lives, he considered it as their blood, and gave thereby a noble instance of self-denial. There is no evidence that David had requested them to bring it; they had gone for it of their own accord, and without the knowledge of David.

**Verse 16. *Poured it out unto the Lord.*** To make libations, both of water and wine, was a frequent custom among the heathens. We have an almost similar account in Arrian's Life of Alexander: "When his army was greatly oppressed with heat and thirst, a soldier brought him a cup of water; he ordered it to be carried back, saying, I cannot bear to drink alone while so many are in want, and this cup is too small to be divided among the whole." Tunc poculo pleno sicut oblatum est reddito: Non solus, inquit, bibere sustineo, nec tam exiguum dividere omnibus possum. — ARRIAN, lib. vi.

The example was noble in both cases, but David added piety to bravery; he poured it out unto the Lord.

**Verse 20. *Two lion-like men of Moab*** Some think that two real lions are meant; some that they were two savage gigantic men; others, that two fortresses are meant. The words שני אראל מואב sheney ariel Moab may signify, as the Targum has rendered it, ית תרי רברבי מואב yath terein rabrebey Moab, "The two princes of Moab."

**Verse 21. *He slew an Egyptian*** This man in 1 Chronicles 11:23 is stated to have been five cubits high, about seven feet six inches.

***He went down to him with a staff*** I have known men who, with a staff only for their defense, could render the sword of the best practiced soldier of no use to him. I have seen even a parallel instance of a man with his staff being attacked by a soldier with his hanger; he soon beat the weapon out of the soldier's hand, and could easily have slain him with his own sword.

We have a good elucidation of this in a duel between Dioxippus the Athenian and Horratas a Macedonian, before Alexander: "The Macedonian, proud of his military skill, treated the naked Athenian with contempt, and then challenged him to fight with him the ensuing day. The Macedonian came armed cap-a-pie to the place; on his left arm he had a brazen shield, and in the same hand a spear called sarissa; he had a javelin in his right hand, and a sword girded on his side; in short, he appeared armed as though he were going to contend with a host. Dioxippus came into the field with a chaplet on his head, a purple sash on his left arm, his body naked, smeared over with oil, and in his right hand a strong knotty club, (*dextra validum nodosumque stipitem praeferibat.*) Horratas, supposing he could easily kill his antagonist while at a distance, threw his javelin, which Dioxippus, suddenly stooping, dexterously avoided, and, before Horratas could transfer the spear from his left to his right hand, sprang forward, and with one blow of his club, broke it in two. The Macedonian being deprived of both his spears, began to draw his sword; but before he could draw it out Dioxippus seized him, tripped up his heels, and threw him with great violence on the ground, (*pedibus repente subductis arietavit in terram.*) He then put his foot on his neck, drew out his sword, and lifting up his club, was about to dash out the brains of the overthrown champion, had he not been prevented by the king." -Q. Curt. lib. ix., cap. 7.

How similar are the two cases! He went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hands, and slew him with his own spear. Benaiah appears to have been just such another clubsman as Dioxippus.

**Verse 23. *David set him over his guard.*** The Vulgate renders this, *Fecitque eun sibi David auricularium a secreto*, “David made him his privy counsellor;” or, according to the Hebrew, He put him to his ears, i.e., confided his secrets to him. Some think he made him a spy over the rest. It is supposed that the meaning of the fable which attributes to Midas very long ears, is, that this king carried the system of espionage to a great length; that he had a multitude of spies in different places.

**Verse 24. *Asahel-was one of the thirty*** Asahel was one of those officers, or troops, called the shalishim. This Asahel, brother of Joab, was the same that was killed by Abner, 2 Samuel 2:23.

**Verse 25. *Shammah the Harodite*** There are several varieties in the names of the following shalishim; which may be seen by comparing these verses with 1 Chronicles 11:27.

**Verse 39. *Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.*** To these the author of 1 Chronicles 11:41 adds Zabad son of Ahlai.

1 Chronicles 11:42 -Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him.

1 Chronicles 11:43 -Hanan the son of Maachah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite,

1 Chronicles 11:44 -Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jehiel the sons of Hothan the Aroerite,

1 Chronicles 11:45 -Jediael the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite,

1 Chronicles 11:46 -Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite,

1 Chronicles 11:47 -Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaite.

THE 4th and 5th verses {2 Samuel 23:4, 5} are very obscure; L. Deuteronomy Dieu gives them a good meaning, if not the true one:—

“The perpetuity of his kingdom David amplifies by a comparison to three natural things, which are very grateful to men, but not constant and stable. For the sun arises and goes down again; the morning may be clear, but



clouds afterwards arise; and the tender grass springs up, but afterwards withers. Not so, said he, is my kingdom before God; it is flourishing like all these, but perpetual, for he has made an everlasting covenant with me, though some afflictions have befallen me; and he has not made all my salvation and desire to grow.”

Deuteronomy Dieu repeats כִּי ke, the note of similitude, thrice; and the following is his version:—

“The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake unto me, (or concerning me:) The just man ruleth among men; he ruleth in the fear of God. And, as the sun ariseth with a shining light; as the morning is without clouds by reason of its splendor; as, from rain, the tender grass springeth out of the earth; truly so is not my house with God: because he hath made an everlasting covenant with me; disposed in all things, and well kept and preserved in that order. Although he doth not make all my deliverance and desire to grow, i.e., though some adversities happen to me and my family; yet, that always remains, which, in the covenant of God made with me, is in all things orderly, disposed, and preserved.”

See Bishop Patrick on the place.

Once more I must beg the reader to refer to the First Dissertation of Dr. Kennicott, on the present state of the printed Hebrew text; in which there is not only great light cast on this subject, several corruptions in the Hebrew text being demonstrated, but also many valuable criticisms on different texts in the sacred writings. There are two Dissertations, 2 vols. 8vo.; and both very valuable.

## CHAPTER 24

*David is tempted by Satan to number Israel and Judah, 1. Joab remonstrates against it, but the king determines that it shall be done; and Joab and the captains accomplish the work, and bring the sum total to the king: viz.: eight hundred thousand warriors in Israel, and five hundred thousand in Judah, 2-9. David is convinced that he has done wrong; and the prophet Gad is sent to him, to give him his choice of three judgments, one of which God is determined to inflict upon the nation, 10-13. David humbles himself before God; and a pestilence is sent, which destroys seventy thousand men, 14, 15. The angel of the Lord being about to destroy Jerusalem, David makes intercession, and the plague is stayed, 16, 17. Gad directs him to build an altar to the Lord on the threshing-floor of Araunah, where the plague was stayed, 18. He purchases this place for the purpose, and offers burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. 19-25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 24

**Verse 1. *He moved David against them*** God could not be angry with David for numbering the people if he moved him to do it; but in the parallel place (1 Chronicles 21:1) it is expressly said, Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. David, in all probability, slackening in his piety and confidence toward God, and meditating some extension of his dominions without the Divine counsel or command, was naturally curious to know whether the number of fighting men in his empire was sufficient for the work which he had projected. See more on 2 Samuel 24:10. He therefore orders Joab and the captains to take an exact account of all the effective men in Israel and Judah. God is justly displeased with this conduct, and determines that the props of his vain ambition shall be taken away, either by famine, war, or pestilence.

**Verse 3. *Joab said unto the king*** This very bad man saw that the measure now recommended by the king was a wrong one, and might be

ruinous to the people, and therefore he remonstrates against it in a very sensible speech; but the king was infatuated, and would hear no reason.

**Verse 5. *And pitched in Aroer*** This was beyond Jordan, on the river Arnon, in the tribe of Gad: hence it appears, says Calmet, that they began their census with the most eastern parts of the country beyond Jordan.

**Verse 6. *Tahtim-hodshi*** Where this place was is not exactly known: some think that the words refer to a newly conquered country, as our margin, the nether land newly inhabited; and if so, this was probably the country eastward of Gilead, which the Israelites, in the time of Saul, had conquered from the Hagarites, and dwelt in themselves. See 1 Chronicles 5:10, where this transaction is recorded.

***To Dan-jaan*** Or, to Dan of the woods. This is the place so frequently mentioned, situated at the foot of Mount Libanus, near to the source of the Jordan, the most northern city of all the possessions of the Israelites in what was called the promised land, as Beer-sheba was the most southern: hence the common form of speech, From Dan to Beer-sheba, i.e., from north to south.

**Verse 7. *The strong hold of Tyre*** This must have been the old city of Tyre, which was built on the main land: the new city was built on a rock in the sea.

**Verse 8. *Nine months and twenty days.*** This was a considerable time; but they had much work to do, nor did they complete the work, as appears from 1 Chronicles 21:6; 27:24. William the Conqueror made a survey of all England, particularizing “how many hides or carucates the land is taxed at; whose it was in the time of his predecessor Edward; who the present owners and sub-tenants; what and how much arable land, meadow, pasture, and wood there is, how much in demesne, i.e., held and cultivated by the landowners; how much in tenancy, and what number of ploughs it will keep; what mills and fisheries; how many sockmen, freemen, co-liberti, cotarii, bordarii, radmanni, radchenisters, villains, maid-servants, and bondmen, there are; how many hogs the woods would support; how many churches, priests, or parsons; what customary rents, prestations, and services, are to be paid and rendered out of the lands; what has been added to the manor; what has been withheld from it, and by whom; what

land is waste, and what the whole was let for in the time of King Edward; and what the nett rent, and whether it was too dear rented, and whether it might be improved." This survey was begun in the year 1080, and was finished in the year 1086, six years having been employed in the work. This most important document is still preserved; it is in the Chapter House, Westminster, in two volumes, one in folio, on three hundred and eighty-two leaves of vellum. the other in quarto, on four hundred and fifty leaves; and is in as good preservation as it was seven hundred years ago. This work was much more difficult than that which was performed by Joab and his fellows. The work itself is known by the name Domesday Book.

**Verse 9. *In Israel eight hundred thousand-the men of Judah were five hundred thousand*** In the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 21:5, the sums are widely different: in Israel one million one hundred thousand, in Judah four hundred and seventy thousand. Neither of these sums is too great, but they cannot be both correct; and which is the true number is difficult to say. The former seems the most likely; but more corruptions have taken place in the numbers of the historical books of the Old Testament, than in any other part of the sacred records. To attempt to reconcile them in every part is lost labor; better at once acknowledge what cannot be successfully denied, that although the original writers of the Old Testament wrote under the influence of the Divine Spirit, yet we are not told that the same influence descended on all copiers of their words, so as absolutely to prevent them from making mistakes. They might mistake, and they did mistake; but a careful collation of the different historical books serves to correct all essential errors of the scribes. See the Dissertations of Dr. Kennicott mentioned at the conclusion of the preceding chapter. {2 Samuel 23:39}

**Verse 10. *David said-I have sinned greatly*** We know not exactly in what this sin consisted. I have already hinted, 2 Samuel 24:1, that probably David now began to covet an extension of empire, and purposed to unite some of the neighboring states with his own; and having, through the suggestions of Satan or some other adversary, (for so the word implies,) given way to this covetous disposition, he could not well look to God for help, and therefore wished to know whether the thousands of Israel and

Judah might be deemed equal to the conquests which he meditated. When God is offended and refuses assistance, vain is the help of man.

**Verse 11. *For when David was up*** It is supposed that David's contrition arose from the reproof given by Gad, and that in the order of time the reproof came before the confession stated in the 10th verse.

***David's seer*** A holy man of God, under the Divine influence, whom David had as a domestic chaplain.

**Verse 13. *Shall seven years of famine*** In 1 Chronicles 21:12, the number is three, not seven; and here the Septuagint has three, the same as in Chronicles: this is no doubt the true reading, the letter ז zain, SEVEN, being mistaken for ג gimel, THREE. A mistake of this kind might be easily made from the similarity of the letters.

**Verse 14. *I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord*** David acted nobly in this business. Had he chosen war, his own personal safety was in no danger, because there was already an ordinance preventing him from going to battle. Had he chosen famine, his own wealth would have secured his and his own family's support. But he showed the greatness of his mind in choosing the pestilence, to the ravages of which himself and household were exposed equally with the meanest of his subjects.

**Verse 15. *From the morning-to the time appointed*** That is, from the morning of the day after David had made his election till the third day, according to the condition which God had proposed, and he had accepted: but it seems that the plague was terminated before the conclusion of the third day, for Jerusalem might have been destroyed, but it was not. Throughout the land, independently of the city, seventy thousand persons were slain! This was a terrible mortality in the space of less than three days.

**Verse 16. *The angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem*** By what means this destruction took place, we know not: it appears that an angel was employed in it, and that this minister of Divine justice actually appeared as an object. of sight; for it is said, 2 Samuel 24:17, When David

saw the angel that smote the people, he said, etc.; and both Ornan and his four sons saw him and were affrighted, 1 Chronicles 21:20.

**The threshing-place of Araunah** These threshing-places, we have already seen, were made in the open air. In the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 21:15, 20, etc., this person is called Ornan. The word that we render Araunah is written in this very chapter אֲרָנָה Auarnah, 2 Samuel 24:16, אֲרָנִיהָ Araniah, 2 Samuel 24:18, אֲרָנָה Araunah or Araunah, 2 Samuel 24:20, and the following: but in every place in 1 Chronicles 21:1-30 where it occurs it is written אֲרָנִי Ornan. It is likely he had both names, Araunah and Ornan: but the varieties of spelling in 2 Samuel must arise from the blunders of transcribers.

**Verse 17. *But these sheep, what have they done?*** It seems that in the order of Providence there is no way of punishing kings in their regal capacity, but by afflictions on their land, in which the people must necessarily suffer. If the king, therefore, by his own personal offenses, in which the people can have no part, bring down God's judgments upon his people, (though they suffer innocently,) grievous will be the account that he must give to God. The people generally suffer for the miscarriages of their governors: this has been observed in every age.

*Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.*

— *“When dotting monarchs urge  
Unsound resolves, their subjects feel the scourge.”*

*HOR. Ep. lib. i., ep. 2, ver. 14.*

**Against my father's house.** That is, against his own family; even to cut it off from the face of the earth.

**Verse 18. *Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord*** This place is supposed to be Mount Moriah: on which, according to the rabbins, Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices; where Abraham attempted to sacrifice Isaac, and where the temple of Solomon was afterwards built.

**Verse 22. *Here be oxen for burnt-sacrifice*** He felt for the king; and showed his loyalty to him by this offer. He felt for the people; and was willing to make any sacrifice to get the plague stayed. He felt for his own

personal safety; and therefore was willing to give up all to save his life. He felt for the honor of God; and therefore was glad that he had a sacrifice to offer, so that God might magnify both his justice and mercy.

**Verse 23. *As a king, give unto the king.*** Literally, All these did King Araunah give unto the king. That there could not be a king of the Jebusites on Mount Moriah, is sufficiently evident; and that there was no other king than David in the land, is equally so: the word המלך hammelech, “the king,” given here to Araunah, is wanting in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic; in three of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS., and in the parallel place in Chronicles: and, it is very probable, never made a part of the text. Perhaps it should be read, All these did Arnunah give unto the king.

There is, however, a difficulty here. David had taken the fortress of the Jebusites many years before; yet it is evident that Araunah was proprietor of the soil at this time. It is not clear that he was a subject of David; but he paid him respect as a neighbor and a king. This is merely possible.

**Verse 24. *Neither will I offer burnt-offerings*** It is a maxim from heaven, “Honour the Lord with thy substance.” He who has a religion that costs him nothing, has a religion that is worth nothing: nor will any man esteem the ordinances of God, if those ordinances cost him nothing. Had Araunah’s noble offer been accepted, it would have been Araunah’s sacrifice, not David’s; nor would it have answered the end of turning away the displeasure of the Most High. It was David that sinned, not Araunah: therefore David must offer sacrifice, and at his own expense too.

**Verse 25. *David-offered burnt-offerings*** And that these sacrifices were pleasing to the Lord, is evident from a circumstance marked in the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 21:26: David called upon the Lord, and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering.

***The plague was stilled*** Jerusalem did not share in the common calamity, seventy thousand being the whole that were slain throughout the land.

THIS book is unfinished, and requires 1 Chronicles 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29, to complete it. A few things relative to this history may be found in the beginning of the following book; but the information in 1 Chronicles is much more extensive and satisfactory.

## MASORETIC NOTES ON THE TWO BOOKS OF SAMUEL

IN the time of the Masoretes the two books of Samuel were considered but as one, and thus divided:—

Number of verses in these two books, 1506.

Number of Masoretic sections, 34.

The middle verse is 1 Samuel 28:24: And the woman had a fat calf in the house, and she hastened and killed it, and took flour and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof.



# PREFACE

TO THE

## FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS,

OTHERWISE CALLED

### THE THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS

IN the most correct and ancient editions of the Hebrew Bible, the two books of Kings make but one, with sometimes a little break, the first book beginning with 1 Samuel 22:40. Some of the ancient fathers seem to have begun the First Book of Kings at the death of David, 1 Kings 2:12. The more modern copies of the Hebrew Bible have the same division as ours; but in the time of the Masoretes they certainly made but one book; as both, like the books of Samuel, are included under one enumeration of sections, verses, etc., in the Masora.

The titles to these books have been various, though it appears from Origen that they had their name from their first words, **דוד והמלך** *vehammelech David*, “and King David;” as Genesis had its name from **בראשית** *bereshith*, “in the beginning.” The Septuagint simply term it **βασιλειων**, of reigns, or kingdoms; of which it calls Samuel the first and second, and these two the third and fourth. The Vulgate has *Liber Regum tertius; secundum Hebraeos, Liber Malachim*: “The Third Book of Kings; but, according to the Hebrews, the First Book of Malachim.” The Syriac has, “Here follows the Book of the Kings who flourished among this ancient people; and in this is also exhibited the history of the prophets who flourished in their times.” The Arabic has the following title: “In the name

of the most merciful and compassionate God; the Book of Solomon, the son of David the prophet, whose benedictions be upon us. — Amen.”

The author of these books is unknown: that they are a compilation out of public and private records, as the books of Samuel are, there is little doubt; but by whom this compilation was made nowhere appears. Some have attributed it to Isaiah and to Jeremiah, because there are several chapters in both these prophets which are similar to some found in the first and second books of Kings; compare 2 Kings 18., 19., and 20., with Isaiah 36., 37., 38., and 39.; and 2 Kings 24:18; 25:1, etc., with Jeremiah 52:1, etc. But rather than allow those prophets to be the authors or compilers of these books, some very learned men have judged that the chapters in question have been taken from the books of Kings in after times, and inserted in those prophets. It is worthy of remark that the fifty-second chapter found in Jeremiah is marked so as to intimate that it is not the composition of that prophet; for at the end of chap. li. we find these words, Thus far are the words of Jeremiah; intimating that the following chapter is not his.

But the most common opinion is, that Ezra was the author, or rather the compiler of the history found in these books. Allowing only the existence of ancient documents from which it was compiled, it appears,

1. That it is the work of one person; as is sufficiently evident from the uniformity of the style, and the connection of events.
2. That this person had ancient documents from which he compiled, and which he often only abridged, is evident from his own words, The rest of the acts of such and such a prince, are they not written in the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, or of Israel, which occur frequently.
3. These books were written during or after the Babylonish captivity, as at the end of the second book that event is particularly described. The author states also, 2 Kings 17:23, that Israel was, in his time, in captivity in Assyria, according to the declaration of God by his prophets.
4. That the writer was not contemporary with the facts which he relates, is evident from the reflections he makes on the facts that he found in the memoirs which he consulted. See 2 Kings 17:6-24.

5. There is every reason to believe that the author was a priest or a prophet; he studies less to describe acts of heroism, successful battles, conquests, political address, etc., than what regards the temple, religion, religious ceremonies, festivals, the worship of God, the piety of princes, the fidelity of the prophets, the punishment of crimes, the manifestation of God's anger against the wicked, and his kindness to the righteous. He appears everywhere strongly attached to the house of David; he treats of the kings of Israel only accidentally; his principal object seems to be the kingdom of Judah, and the matters which concern it.

Now, all this agrees well with the supposition that Ezra was the compiler of these books. He was not only a priest, a zealous servant of God, and a reformer of the corruptions which had crept into the Divine worship, but is universally allowed by the Jews to have been the collector and compiler of the whole sacred code, and author of the arrangement of the different books which constitute the Old Testament. If some things be found in these books of Kings which do not agree to his time, they may be easily accounted for on his often taking the facts as he found them in the documents which he consults, without any kind of alteration; and this is so far a proof of his great sincerity and scrupulous exactness.

The First Book of Kings contains the history of one hundred and nineteen years, from A.M. 2989 to A.M. 3108. It contains a great variety of interesting particulars, the chief of which are the following: The death of David; the reign of Solomon; the building and dedication of the temple; the building of Solomon's palace; an account of his great wisdom; his magnificence, and his fall; the division of Israel and Judah under Rehoboam; the idolatry of the ten tribes over whom Jeroboam became king. It states how Judah, Benjamin, and Levi attached themselves to the house of David; how Rehoboam was attacked by Shishak, king of Egypt, who pillaged the temple; how Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam, and seized on the government of Israel; how Jehu predicted the ruin of Baasha; how Ahab married the impious Jezebel, and persecuted the prophets of the Lord. It relates the acts of Elijah; the destruction of the prophets of Baal; the cruel death of Naboth; the death of Ahab; the good reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; and the wicked reign of Ahaziah, king of Israel, etc. See Calmet's preface to the first and second books of Kings.

# THE FIRST BOOK

OF

# THE KINGS

- Year from the Creation, according to the English Bible, 2989.
- Year before the Incarnation, 1015.
- Year from the destruction of Troy, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 170.
- Year before the first Olympiad, 239.
- Year before the building of Rome, 262.
- Year of the Julian Period, 3699.
- Year of the Dionysian Period, 507.
- Cycle of the Sun, 3.
- Cycle of the Moon, 13.
- Year of Acastus, the second perpetual archon of the Athenians, 31.
- Pyritiades was king over the Assyrians about this time, according to Scaliger, Langius, and Strauchius. He was the thirty-seventh monarch, (including Belus,) according to Africanus, and the thirty-third according to Eusebius.
- Year of Alba Silvius, the sixth king of the Latins, 15.
- Year of David, king of the Hebrews, 40.

## CHAPTER 1

*David, grown old, is, by the advice of his physicians, cherished by Abishag the Shunummite, 1-4. Adonijah conspires with Joab and Abiathar to seize on the government, 5-10. Nathan and Bathsheba communicate these tidings to the aged king, 11-27. David immediately pronounces Solomon his successor, and causes Zadok and Nathan to proclaim and anoint him king, 28-40. Adonijah and his friends hear of it, are afraid, and flee away, Adonijah laying hold on the horns of the altar, from which he refuses to go till Solomon shall promise him his life; this he does, and banishes him to his own house, 41-53.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. *Now King David was old*** He was probably now about sixty-nine years of age. He was thirty years old when he began to reign, reigned forty, and died in the seventieth year of his age, 2 Samuel 5:4, and 1 Kings 2:11; and the transactions mentioned here are supposed to have taken place about a year before his death.

***But he gat no heat.*** Sixty-nine was not an advanced age; but David had been exhausted with various fatigues, and especially by family afflictions, so that he was much older in constitution than he was in years. Besides he seems to have labored under some wasting maladies, to which there is frequent reference in the Psalms.

**Verse 2. *Let there be sought-a young virgin*** This was the best remedy which in his state could be prescribed. His nearly exhausted frame would infallibly absorb from her young and healthy body an additional portion of animal heat, and consequently trim and revive the flame of animal life. This is properly, as I have elsewhere expressed it, Friar Bacon's secret for the cure of old age.

**Verse 4. *The king knew her not.*** The maxim of Bacon in his enigmatical cure is, "Take all you can from the medicine, but give nothing to it; if you give any thing, it increases the disease and hastens death." I have seen this

abundantly verified; but it is a subject on which it would be improper to dilate except in a medical work. An extract from Friar Bacon's Cure of Old Age may be found at the end of the chapter.

**Verse 5. *Adonijah the son of Haggith*** Who this woman was we know not; Adonijah was evidently David's eldest son now living, and one of whom his father was particularly fond; see 1 Kings 1:6.

***Prepared him chariots and horsemen*** He copied the conduct of his brother Absalom in every respect. See 2 Samuel 15:1.

**Verse 7. *And he conferred with Joab*** Joab well knew, if he made the new king, he would necessarily be continued in the command of the army, and so govern him.

**Verse 8. *And Nathan*** Some suppose that he was the preceptor of Solomon.

**Verse 9. *Slew sheep and oven*** Making a royal feast, in reference to his inauguration. As he had Abiathar the priest with him, no doubt these animals were offered sacrificially, and then the guests fed on the flesh of the victims. He had not only a splendid feast, but a great sacrifice; and he gave by this a popular color to his pretensions, by affecting to receive his authority from God.

**Verse 11. *Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign*** He was now considered as being legally appointed to the regal office, and no doubt was about to begin to perform its functions.

**Verse 12. *Save thine own life, and the life of thy son*** Nathan took for granted that Adonijah would put both Bath-sheba and Solomon to death as state criminals, if he got established on the throne. O cursed lust of rule! a father will destroy his son, a son depose his father, and a brother murder a brother, in order to obtain a crown! At this time the monarchy of Israel was unsettled; no man knew who was to succeed to the crown, and the minds of the people were as unsettled as the succession. I have examined both systems, and find that, with all its alleged disadvantages, hereditary monarchy has a high balance of evidence in its favor beyond that which is elective, and is every way more safe for the state and more secure for the subject.

**Verse 13. *Go and get thee in unto King David*** He knew that this woman had a sovereign influence over the king. If Bath-sheba was a source of pleasure to David, must she not also have been a source of pain to him? For could he ever forget the guilty manner in which he acquired her?

***Didst not thou-swear*** It is very likely that David made such an oath, and that was known only to Bath-sheba and Nathan. It is nowhere else mentioned.

**Verse 20. *That thou shouldest tell-who shall sit on the throne*** This was a monarchy neither hereditary nor elective; the king simply named his successor. This obtained less or more, anciently, in most countries.

**Verse 21. *Shall be counted offenders.*** When Adonijah and his party shall find that I and my son have had this promise from thee by oath, he will slay us both.

**Verse 28. *Call me Bath-sheba.*** She had gone out when Nathan came in, and he retired when she was re-admitted. Each had a separate audience, but to Nathan the king did not express any will.

**Verse 33. *Take with you the servants of your lord*** By these we may understand the kings guards, the guards of the city, the Cherethites and Pelethites, who were under the command of Benaiah; and in short, all the disposable force that was at hand.

***Solomon-to ride upon mine own mule*** No subject could use any thing that belonged to the prince, without forfeiting his life. As David offered Solomon to ride on his own mule, this was full evidence that he had appointed him his successor.

**Verse 34. *Blow ye with the trumpet*** After he has been anointed, make proclamation that he is king.

**Verse 36. *Sit upon my throne*** The matter of conducting a business of this kind seems to have been this: 1. The king elect was placed on the mule of his predecessor, and caused to ride abroad to one of the public wells, or to a river where there was the greatest concourse of people, that they might see who he was that was appointed. Solomon was here taken to the river Gihon, in order to be anointed; the continual stream or constantly running fountain, denoting the perpetuity of the kingdom. 2. The priest and the

prophet anointed him in the name of the Lord; and thereby signified that he should be endued with all the kingly virtues; that he should reign by, under, and for the Lord. 3. The trumpet was then to be blown, and solemn proclamation made, that he was anointed king. 4. He was then brought and solemnly placed on the throne, to signify that he had now assumed the reins of government, and was about to administer justice and judgement to the people.

**Verse 37. *Make his throne greater than the throne of-David.*** A wish of this kind a king will suffer in behalf of his son, but it is never in ordinary cases considered a compliment to say, “I hope this child will make a better man than his father,” because it seems to insinuate some reflections on his father’s conduct or character. Many foolish people deal in such compliments, and they may rest assured, for the reasons given above, that they are far from being either welcome or agreeable.

Claudian, in his panegyric Deuteronomy Quarto Consulatu Honorii Augusti, ver. 428, has words something similar to those of Benaiah, when he describes a father, worn out with toils and difficulties, committing the reins of government to the hands of his son:—

*Adspice, completur votum: jam natus adaequat  
Te meritis; et, quod magis est optabile, vincit.*

*“Behold, thy desire is accomplished.  
Even now thy son equals thee in worth;  
and what is still more desirable, surpasses thee.”*

**Verse 39. *Zadok-took a horn of oil*** Pottery and glass were little in use in those times; and horns were frequently used to hold oil and wine. The oil used here was the holy anointing oil, which was laid up in the tabernacle, and which was used for the anointing of both priests and kings.

**Verse 40. *The people piped with pipes*** They danced, sang, and played on what instruments of music they possessed.

***The earth rent*** We use a similar expression in precisely the same sense: They rent the air with their cries.

**Verse 43. *Jonathan answered*** He was properly a messenger about the court; we have met with him and Ahimaaz before, 2 Samuel 15:36. He had



now been an observer, if not a spy, on all that was doing, and relates the transactions to Adonijah, in the very order in which they took place.

1. David has nominated Solomon his successor.
2. Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah, have been appointed to set him on the king's mule.
3. They have taken him to Gihon, and anointed him there.
4. They have brought him up to Jerusalem and placed him on the throne of the kingdom.

**Verse 47. *Moreover, the king's servants came*** The king himself was at this time confined to his own house, and probably to his bed, and could not possibly see these ceremonies; therefore his confidential servants came and told him. We know not how Jonathan, in so short a time, possessed himself of so much information.

**Verse 50. *Adonijah feared*** He knew he had usurped the kingdom, and had not his father's consent; and, as he finds now that Solomon is appointed by David, he knows well that the people will immediately respect that appointment, and that his case is hopeless; he therefore took sanctuary, and, fleeing to the tabernacle, laid hold on one of the horns of the altar, as if appealing to the protection of God against the violence of men. The altar was a privileged place, and it was deemed sacrilege to molest a man who had taken refuge there. See 1 Kings 2:28.

**Verse 52. *If he will show himself a worthy man*** If, from henceforth, he behave well, show himself to be contented, and not endeavor to make partisans, or stir up insurrections among the people, he shall be safe; but if wickedness be found in him-if he act at all contrary to this-he shall die; his blood shall be upon him.

**Verse 53. *Go to thine house.*** Intimating that he should have no place about the king's person, nor under the government. Adonijah must have seen that he stood continually on his good behavior.

Friar Bacon's method of restoring and strengthening the Natural Heat

“I have read many volumes of the wise: I find few things in physic which restore the natural heat, weakened by dissolution of the innate moisture, or increase of a foreign one.

“But certain wise men have tacitly made mention of some medicine, which is likened to that which goes out of the mine of the noble animal. They affirm that in it there is a force and virtue which restores and increases the natural heat. As to its disposition, they say it is like youth itself, and contains an equal and temperate complexion.

“And the signs of a temperate complexion in men are when their color is made up of white and red, when the hair is yellow, inclined to redness and curling.

“This medicine indeed is like to such a complexion, for it is of a temperate heat: its flame is temperate and sweet, and grateful to the smell. When it departs from this temperature, it departs so far from its virtue and goodness.

“This medicine therefore temperately heats, because it is temperately hot; it therefore heals because it is whole. When it is sick, it makes a man sick; when it is distempered, it breeds distempers, and changes the body to its own disposition, because of the similitude it has with the body.

“For the infirmity of a brute animal rarely passes into a man, but into another animal of the same kind; but the infirmity of man passes into man; and so does health, because of likeness.

“This thing is seldom found; and although sometimes it be found, yet it cannot commodiously be had of all men.

“Now, when this thing is like to youth, that is, of temperate complexion, it has good operations; if its temperature be better, it produces better effects: sometimes it is even in the highest degree of its perfection, and then it operates best; and then there is that property whereof we have spoken before.

“This differs from other medicines and nutriments, which heat and moisten after a certain temperate manner, and are good for old men. For other medicines principally heat and moisten the body; and, secondarily, they strengthen the native heat, and after that refresh the body, by moistening

and heating it. For it brings back this heat in old men, who have it but weakly and deficient, to a certain stronger and more vehement power.

“If a plaster be made hereof, and applied to the stomach, it will help very much, for it will refresh the stomach itself, and excite an appetite; it will very much recreate an old man, and change him to a kind of youth; and will make complexions, by what means soever depraved or corrupted, better. But it is to be observed, that Venus doth weaken and diminish the power and virtue of this thing!

“And it is very likely that the son of the prince, in his second canon of the Operations of Simple Medicines spoke of this thing, where he saith, that there is a certain medicine, concealed by wise men, lest the incontinent should offend their Creator. There is such a heat in this thing, as is in young men of sound complexion; and if I durst declare the properties of this heat, this most hidden secret should presently be revealed. For this heat doth help the palsical, it restores and preserves the wasted strength of the native heat, and causeth it to flourish in all the members, and gently revives the aged.

“But the simple medicine which restores the native heat, when wasted and weakened, is that which is likened to the complexion of a healthy young man.”

All this covered and enigmatical description is intended simply to point out that very medicine recommended by the Jewish physicians to restore and invigorate the dying king. I could show the bearing of every sentence, but I must leave something to the good sense of my readers. By attending to the words in italics, the sense will be more easily discovered. See my note on Ruth 4:16.

## CHAPTER 2

*David leaves his dying charge with Solomon, relative to his own personal conduct, 1-4; to Joab, 5, 6; to Barzillai, 7; to Shimei, 8, 9. He dies, and Solomon is established in the kingdom, 10-12. Adonijah requests to have Abishag to wife, and is put to death by Solomon, 13-25. Abiathar the priest is banished to his estate at Anathoth, 26, 27. Joab, fearing for his life, flees to the horns of the altar, and is slain there by Benaiah, 28-34. Benaiah is made captain of the host in his stead, 35. Shimei is ordered to confine himself to Jerusalem, and never leave it on pain of death, 36-38. After three years he follows some of his runaway servants to Gath, and thereby forfeits his life, 39, 40. Solomon sends for him, upbraids him, and commands him to be slain by Benaiah, 41-46.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 2. *I go the way of all the earth*** I am dying. All the inhabitants of the earth must come to the dust. In life, some follow one occupation, some another; but all must, sooner or later, come to the grave. Death is no respecter of persons; he visits the palace of the king as well as the cottage of the peasant.

*Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,  
Regumque turres. — HOR. Odar. lib. i., od. iv., ver. 13.*

*“With equal pace, impartial fate  
Knocks at the palace as the cottage gate.” FRANCIS.*

*— Sed omnes una manet nox,  
Et calcanda semel via lethi. -Ib. od. xxviii., ver. 15.*

*“One dreary night for all mankind remains,  
And once we all must tread the shadowy plains.” Ibid.*

There is no respect to age or youth more than to station or external circumstance:—

*Mixta senum ac juvenum densantur funera: nullum  
Saeva caput Proserpina fugit.*

*Ib. od. xxviii., ver. 19.*

*Thus age and youth promiscuous crowd the tomb;  
No mortal head can shun the impending doom.” Ibid.*

And it is not merely man that is subjected to this necessity; all that have in them the breath of life must lose it; it is the way of all the earth, both of men and inferior animals.

*— Terrestria quando Mortales animas vivunt sortita,  
neque ulla est Aut parvo aut magno lethi fuga.  
Vive memor quam sis aevi brevis.*

*HOR. Sat. l. ii., s. vi., ver. 93.*

*“All that tread the earth are subject to mortality;  
neither great nor small can avoid death.  
Live therefore conscious that your time is short.”*

It is painful to the pride of the great and mighty that, however decorated their tombs may be, they must undergo the same dissolution and corruption with the vulgar dead; for the grave is the house appointed for all living: man is born to die.

*Omnium idem exitus est, sed et idem domicilium.*

*“For all have the same end, and are huddled  
together in the same narrow house.”*

Here emperors, kings, statesmen, warriors, heroes, and butchers of all kinds, with peasants and beggars, meet; however various their routes, they terminate in the same point. This and all other kindred sentiments on the subject are well expressed in that excellent little poem of Mr. Blair, entitled THE GRAVE, which opens with the following lines:—

While some affect the sun, and some the shade; Some flee the city, some the hermitage;  
Their aims as various as the roads they take In journeying through life;  
the task be mine To paint the gloomy horrors of the tomb,  
The appointed place of rendezvous, where all These travelers meet.

**Show thyself a man** Act like a rational being, and not like a brute; and remember, that he acts most like a man who is most devoted to his GOOD.

**Verse 3. Keep the charge of the Lord** Keep what God has given thee to keep.

1. Walk in his ways. Not in thine own, nor in the ways of a wicked, perishing world.
2. Keep his statutes. Consider all his appointments to be holy, just, and good; receive them as such, and conscientiously observe them.
3. Keep his commandments. Whatever he has bidden thee to do, perform; what he has forbidden thee to do, omit.
4. Keep his judgments. What he has determined to be right, is essentially and inherently right; what he has determined to be wrong or evil, is inherently and essentially so. A thing is not good because God has commanded it; a thing is not evil because he has forbidden it. He has commanded the good, because it is in its own nature good and useful; he has forbidden the evil, because it is in its own nature bad and hurtful. Keep therefore his judgments.
5. Keep his testimonies. Bear witness to all to which he has borne witness. His testimonies are true; there is no deceit or falsity in them. His testimonies refer also to future good things and good times; they are the signifiers of coming blessedness: as such, respect them.

**That thou mayest prosper** If thou hast God's approbation, thou wilt have God's blessing. If thy ways please him, he will not withhold from thee any manner of thing that is good.

**Verse 4. That the Lord may continue his word** The prosperity which God has promised to grant to my family will depend on their faithfulness to the good they receive; if they live to God, they shall sit for ever on the throne of Israel. But alas! they did not; and God's justice cut off the entail made by his mercy.

**Verse 5. Thou knowest-what Joab-did to me** He did every thing bad and dishonorable in itself, in the murder of Abner and Amasa, and indeed in the death of the profligate Absalom.

***Shed the blood of war-upon his girdle-and in his shoes*** He stabbed them while he pretended to embrace them, so that their blood gushed out on his girdle, and fell into his shoes! This was a most abominable aggravation of his crimes.

**Verse 6. *Let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.*** It would have been an insult to justice not to have taken the life of Joab. David was culpable in delaying it so long; but probably the circumstances of his government would not admit of his doing it sooner. According to the law of God, Joab, having murdered Abner and Amasa, should die. And had not David commanded Solomon to perform this act of justice, he could not have died in the approbation of his Maker.

**Verse 7. *But show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai*** See the notes on 2 Samuel 19:31, etc.

**Verse 8. *Thou hast with thee Shimei*** See on 2 Samuel 16:5, etc., and the notes on 2 Samuel 19:18-23.

**Verse 9. *Hold him not guiltless*** Do not consider him as an innocent man, though I have sworn to him that I would not put him to death by the sword; yet as thou art a wise man, and knowest how to treat such persons, treat him as he deserves; only as I have sworn to him, and he is an aged man, let him not die a violent death; bring not down his hoary head to the grave with blood. So Solomon understood David, and so I think David should be understood; for the negative particle **לֹא** lo, in the former clause, hold him NOT guiltless, should be repeated in this latter clause, though not expressed, his hoary head bring thou NOT down; instances of which frequently occur in the Hebrew Bible. See Dr. Kennicott's note at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 10. *David slept with his fathers*** His life was a life of remarkable providences, of much piety, and of great public usefulness. In general he lived well, and it is most evident that he died well; and as a king, a general, a poet, a father, and a friend, he has had few equals, and no superior, from his own time to the present day. But I shall reserve a more particular consideration of his character till I come to the book of Psalms, in which that character, with all its lights and shades, is exhibited by his own masterly hand. And it is from this composition alone that we can know

David, and the maxims by which he was governed in public and private life.

***Was buried in the city of David.*** And Solomon, says Josephus, deposited immense treasures with him, in the grave, where they continued unmolested for thirteen hundred years, till Hyrcanus, the high priest, being besieged by Antiochus, opened the sepulcher, and took thence three thousand talents, part of which he gave to Antiochus, to raise the siege. It is added that, many years afterwards, Herod the Great ransacked this tomb and got considerable riches. Little credit is due to this account, though we know that was customary in ancient times to deposit with the more illustrious dead, gold, silver, and precious stones. That the tomb of David existed in the days of the apostles, we learn from Acts 2:29, where St. Peter, addressing the Jews, says, Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David; that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. St. Jerome speaks of it as existing in his time, and modern travelers pretend that it is still in existence. But both monks and Mohammedans have long united to impose on Christian pilgrims; and there is scarcely any dependence to be placed on any of their relations; absurdity and self-contradiction are their principal characteristics.

**Verse 15. *Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine*** It certainly was his by the right of primogeniture, and it was his by the voice of the people, and the consent of the high priest. But there was a right paramount to all these, the right of God; it was his kingdom; the kings were his lieutenants, and he had a right to give the crown to whomsoever he pleased, and he was pleased to give it to Solomon.

**Verse 17. *That he give me Abishag-to wife.*** He cheerfully gives up all right to the kingdom, and only desires to have this young woman, who, though she had been his father's wife or concubine, was still in a state of virginity. Some think that Joab and Abiathar had advised Adonijah to make this application, not doubting, if he got Abishag, that the popular tide would again turn in his favor, and that Solomon, whom they did not like, might soon be deposed; and that it was on this account that Solomon was so severe. But there is little evidence to support these conjectures. It does not appear that Adonijah by desiring to have Abishag had any thought of



the kingdom, or of maintaining any right to it, though Solomon appears to have understood him in this sense. But without farther evidence, this was a flimsy pretext to imbrue his hands in a brother's blood. The fable of the wolf and lamb is here very applicable, and the old English proverb not less so: It is an easy thing to find a staff to beat a dog with. We readily find an excuse for whatever we are determined to do. He who attempts to varnish over this conduct of Solomon by either state necessity or a Divine command, is an enemy, in my mind, to the cause of God and truth. See on 1 Kings 2:25.

**Verse 25. *Solomon sent-Benaiah-and he fell upon him that he died.***

Benaiah seems to have been the public state executioner, and yet he was generalissimo of all the forces. See him employed in a similar work, 1 Kings 2:34, 46. I suppose him to have been such another general as Suwarrow, butcher-general of the Turks and Poles to the late Empress Catharine of Russia: like mistress, like man. But they have long since been called to an impartial tribunal.

That this was an act of cruelty towards Adonijah, needs no proof. He is suspected, condemned, and slain, without a hearing. Calmet vindicates all this by various assumptions, and lays down a doctrine that is calculated for the meridian of Fez or Morocco; hear him: Un prince, dans ses jugemens, ne peut pas toujours suivre les regles de la plus parfaite morale; la politique, et le bien de l'etat, obligent souvent a des choses opposees aux conseils de l'evangile; "A prince in his judgments cannot always follow the rules of the most perfect morality; policy and the good of the state often require things to be done which are contrary to the counsels of the Gospel." What a diabolic maxim is this! And is this indeed the way that French kings ruled and ministers decreed judgment? Then we need not wonder at a revolution in that state, nor of the scourge that desolated the land. O England! magnify God for your constitution, your constitutional king, and the laws according to which he reigns.

**Verse 27. *So Solomon thrust out Abiathar*** This was for having taken part before with Adonijah, but by it a remarkable prophecy was fulfilled; see 1 Samuel 2:13-35, and the notes there. God had told Eli that the priesthood should depart from his house; Abiathar was the last of the descendants of Ithamar, of which family was Eli the high priest. Zadok,

who was made priest in the stead of Abiathar, was of the family of Eliezer; and by this change the priesthood reverted to its ancient channel. Abiathar deserved this degradation; he supported Adonijah in his unnatural assumption of the royal dignity, even during the life of his father. This was the head and front of his offending.

**Verse 28. Tidings came to Joab** He heard that Adonijah had been slain and Abiathar banished, and probably he had heard of David's dying charge to Solomon. Fearing therefore for his personal safety, he takes refuge at the tabernacle, as claiming Divine protection, and desiring to have his case decided by God alone; or perhaps a spark of remorse is now kindled; and, knowing that he must die, he wishes to die in the house of God, as it were under the shadow, that he might receive the mercy of the Almighty.

**Verse 30. Nay; but I will die here.** The altars were so sacred among all the people, that, in general, even the vilest wretch found safety, if he once reached the altar. This led to many abuses, and the perversion of public justice; and at last it became a maxim that the guilty should be punished, should they even have taken refuge at the altars. God decreed that the presumptuous murderer who had taken refuge at the altar should be dragged thence, and put to death; see Exodus 21:14. The heathens had the same kind of ordinance; hence Euripides:—

εγω γαρ οστις μη δικαιος ων ανηρ  
βωμον προσιζει, τον νομον χαιρειν εων,  
προς την δικην αγοιμ' αν, αυ τρεσας θεους· κακον  
γαρ ανδρα χρη κακως πασχειν αι.

EURIPID. Frag. 42. Edit. Musg.

“If an unrighteous man, availing himself of the law, should claim the protection of the altar, I would drag him to justice, nor fear the wrath of the gods; for it is necessary that every wicked man should suffer for his crimes.”

**Verse 34. So Benaiah-went up-and slew him** It appears he slew him at the very altar. Joab must have been both old and infirm at this time, and now he bleeds for Abner, he bleeds for Amasa, and he bleeds for Uriah. The two former he murdered; of the blood of the latter he was not

innocent; yet he had done the state much service, and they knew it. But he was a murderer, and vengeance would not suffer such to live.

**Verse 36. *Build thee a house*** Thus he gave him the whole city for a prison, and this certainly could have reduced him to no hardships.

**Verse 37. *Thy blood shall be upon thine own head.*** Thou knowest what to expect; if thou disobey my orders thou shalt certainly be slain, and then thou shalt be considered as a self-murderer; thou alone shalt be answerable for thy own death. Solomon knew that Shimei was a seditious man, and he chose to keep him under his own eye; for such a man at large, in favorable circumstances, might do much evil. His bitter revilings of David were a sufficient proof.

**Verse 40. *And Shimei-went to Gath*** It is astonishing that with his eyes wide open he would thus run into the jaws of death.

**Verse 45. *King Solomon shall be blessed*** He seems to think that, while such bad men remained unpunished, the nation could not prosper; that it was an act of justice which God required him to perform, in order to the establishment and perpetuity of his throne.

**Verse 46. *And the kingdom was established*** He had neither foes within nor without. He was either dreaded or loved universally. His own subjects were affectionately bound to him, and the surrounding nations did not think proper to make him their enemy.

As there are serious doubts relative to the dying charge of David as it relates to Shimei, most believing that, in opposition to his own oath, David desired that Solomon should put him to death; I shall here insert Dr. Kennicott's criticism on this part of the text:—

“David is here represented in our English version as finishing his life with giving a command to Solomon to kill Shimei, and to kill him on account of that very crime for which, as David here says, he had sworn to him by the Lord he would not put him to death. The behavior thus imputed to the king and prophet, and which would be justly censurable if true, should be examined very carefully as to the ground it stands upon; and when the passage is duly considered, I presume it will appear highly probable that an injury has been here done to this illustrious character. The point to

which I now beg the reader's attention is this: That it is not uncommon in the Hebrew language to omit the negative in a second part of the sentence, and to consider it as repeated, when it has been once expressed, and is followed by the connecting particle. And thus on Isaiah 13:22 the late learned annotator says: 'The negative is repeated or referred to by the conjunction *vau*, as in many other places.' So also Isaiah 23:4. The necessity of so very considerable an alteration as inserting the particle NOT, may be here confirmed by some other instances. Psalm 1:5: The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, NOR (the Hebrew is AND, signifying and not) sinners in the congregation of the righteous. Psalm 9:18: The needy shall not alway be forgotten, (and then the negative, understood as repeated by the conjunction, now dropped,) the expectation of the poor shall (NOT) perish for ever. Psalm 38:1: O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath; NEITHER (AND, for and not) chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Psalm 75:5: Lift not up your horn on high, (and then the negative, understood as repeated by the conjunction, now dropped,) speak (NOT) with a stiff neck. Proverbs 24:12, (our version is this:) Doth not he, that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth the soul, doth (NOT) he know it? and shall (NOT) he render to every man according to his works? And Proverbs 30:3: I neither learned wisdom, NOR (AND, for and not) have the knowledge of the holy. If then there are in fact many such instances, the question is, Whether the negative here, expressed in the former part of David's command, may not be understood as to be repeated in the latter part; and if this may be, a strong reason will be added why it should be, so interpreted. The passage will run thus: 'Behold, thou hast with thee Shimei, who cursed me-but I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death by the sword. Now, therefore, hold him NOT guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him,) but bring NOT down his hoar head to the grave with blood.' Now if the language itself will admit of this construction, the sense thus given to the sentence derives a very strong support from the context. For how did Solomon understand this charge? Did he kill Shimei in consequence of it? Certainly he did not; for after he had immediately commanded Joab to be slain, in obedience to his father, he sends for Shimei, and knowing that Shimei ought to be well watched, confines him to a particular spot in Jerusalem for the remainder of his life; 1 Kings 2:36-42.

See also Job 23:17; 30:20; 31:20.” This is the best mode of interpreting this text.

## CHAPTER 3

*Solomon marries Pharaoh's daughter, 1, 2. He serves God, and offers a thousand burnt-offerings upon one altar, at Gibeon, 3, 4. God appears to him in a dream at Gibeon; and asks what he shall give him, 5. He asks wisdom; with which God is well pleased, and promises to give him not only that, but also riches and honor; and, if obedient, long life, 6-14. He comes back to Jerusalem; and offers burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and makes a feast for his servants, 15. His judgment between the two harlots, 16-27. He rises in the esteem of the people, 28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh*** This was no doubt a political measure in order to strengthen his kingdom, and on the same ground he continued his alliance with the king of Tyre; and these were among the most powerful of his neighbors. But should political considerations prevail over express laws of God? God had strictly forbidden his people to form alliances with heathenish women, lest they should lead their hearts away from him into idolatry. Let us hear the law: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son; for they will turn away thy son from following me, etc. Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3, 4. Now Solomon acted in direct opposition to these laws; and perhaps in this alliance were sown those seeds of apostacy from God and goodness in which he so long lived, and in which he so awfully died.

Those who are, at all hazards, his determinate apologists, assume, 1. That Pharaoh's daughter must have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, else Solomon would not have married her. 2. That God was not displeased with this match. 3. That the book of Canticles, which is supposed to have been his epithalamium, would not have found a place in the sacred canon had the spouse, whom it all along celebrates, been at that time an idolatress. 4.

That it is certain we nowhere in Scripture find Solomon blamed for this match. See Dodd.

Now to all this I answer, 1. We have no evidence that the daughter of Pharaoh was a proselyte, no more than that her father was a true believer. It is no more likely that he sought a proselyte here than that he sought them among the Moabites, Hittites, etc., from whom he took many wives. 2. If God's law be positively against such matches, he could not possibly be pleased with this breach of it in Solomon; but his law is positively against them, therefore he was not pleased. 3. That the book of Canticles being found in the sacred canon is, according to some critics, neither a proof that the marriage pleased God, nor that the book was written by Divine inspiration; much less that it celebrates the love between Christ and his Church, or is at all profitable for doctrine, for reproof, or for edification in righteousness. 4. That Solomon is most expressly reprov'd in Scripture for this very match, is to me very evident from the following passages: DID NOT SOLOMON, king of Israel, SIN by these things? Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin; Nehemiah 13:26. Now it is certain that Pharaoh's daughter was an outlandish woman; and although it be not expressly said that Pharaoh's daughter is here intended, yet there is all reasonable evidence that she is included; and, indeed, the words seem to intimate that she is especially referred to. In 1 Kings 3:3 it is said, Solomon LOVED THE LORD, walking in the statutes of David; and Nehemiah says, Did not Solomon, king of Israel, SIN BY THESE THINGS, who WAS BELOVED OF HIS GOD; referring, most probably, to this early part of Solomon's history. But supposing that this is not sufficient evidence that this match is spoken against in Scripture, let us turn to 1 Kings 11:1, 2, of this book, where the cause of Solomon's apostasy is assigned; and there we read, But King Solomon loved many STRANGE WOMEN, TOGETHER WITH THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites: of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in unto them; neither shall they come in unto you; for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: SOLOMON CLAVE UNTO THESE IN LOVE. Here the marriage with Pharaoh's daughter is classed most positively with the most exceptionable of his

matrimonial and concubinal alliances: as it no doubt had its predisposing share in an apostasy the most unprecedented and disgraceful.

Should I even be singular, I cannot help thinking that the reign of Solomon began rather inauspiciously: even a brother's blood must be shed to cause him to sit securely on his throne, and a most reprehensible alliance, the forerunner of many others of a similar nature, was formed for the same purpose. But we must ever be careful to distinguish between what God has commanded to be done, and what was done through the vile passions and foolish jealousies of men. Solomon had many advantages, and no man ever made a worse use of them.

**Verse 2. *The people sacrificed in high places*** Could there be any sin in this, or was it unlawful till after the temple was built? for prophets, judges, the kings which preceded Solomon, and Solomon himself, sacrificed on high places, such as Gibeon, Gilgal, Shiloh, Hebron, Kirjath-jearim, etc. But after the temple was erected, it was sinful to offer sacrifices in any other place; yet here it is introduced as being morally wrong, and it is introduced, 1 Kings 3:3, as being an exceptionable trait in the character of Solomon. The explanation appears to be this: as the ark and tabernacle were still in being, it was not right to offer sacrifices but where they were; and wherever they were, whether on a high place or a plain, there sacrifices might be lawfully offered, previously to the building of the temple. And the tabernacle was now at Gibeon, 2 Chronicles 1:3. Possibly the high places may be like those among the Hindoos, large raised-up terraces, on which they place their gods when they bathe, anoint, and worship them. Juggernaut and Krishnu have large terraces or high places, on which they are annually exhibited. But there was no idol in the above case.

**Verse 5. *The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream*** This was the night after he had offered the sacrifices, (see 2 Chronicles 1:7,) and probably after he had earnestly prayed for wisdom; see Wisdom, 7:7: Wherefore I prayed, and understanding was given me: I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. If this were the case, the dream might have been the consequence of his earnest prayer for wisdom: the images of those things which occupy the mind during the day are most likely to recur during the night; and this, indeed, is the origin of the greater part of our dreams. But this appears to have been supernatural.



Gregory Nyssen, speaking of different kinds of dreams, observes that our organs and brain are not unlike a musical instrument; while the strings of such instruments have their proper degree of tension, they give, when touched, a harmonious sound, but as soon as they are relaxed or screwed down, they give no sound at all. During our waking hours, our senses, touched by our reason, produce the most harmonious concert; but as soon as we are asleep, the instrument is no longer capable of emitting any sound, unless it happen that the remembrance of what passed during the day returns and presents itself to the mind while we are asleep, and so forms a dream; just as the strings of an instrument continue to emit feeble sounds for some time after the musician has ceased to strike them. — See GREG. NYSS. Deuteronomy opificio hominis, cap. xii., p. 77. Oper. vol. i., edit. Morell., Par. 1638.

This may account, in some measure, for common dreams: but even suppose we should not allow that Solomon had been the day before earnestly requesting the gift of wisdom from God, yet we might grant that such a dream as this might be produced by the immediate influence of God upon the soul. And if Solomon received his wisdom by immediate inspiration from heaven, this was the kind of dream that he had; a dream by which that wisdom was actually communicated. But probably we need not carry this matter so much into miracle: God might be the author of his extraordinary wisdom, as he was the author of his extraordinary riches.

**Verse 9. *Give-an understanding heart to judge thy people*** He did not ask wisdom in general, but the true science of government. This wisdom he sought, and this wisdom he obtained.

**Verse 12. *I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart*** I have given thee a capacious mind, one capable of knowing much: make a proper use of thy powers, under the direction of my Spirit, and thou shalt excel in wisdom all that have gone before thee; neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. But, query, Was not all this conditional? If he should walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and commandments, 1 Kings 3:14. Was it not to depend upon his proper use of initiatory inspirations? Did he ever receive all this wisdom? Did not his unfaithfulness prevent the fulfillment of the Divine purpose? Instead of being the wisest of men, did he not become more brutish than any man? Did he not even lose the knowledge of his Creator, and worship the abominations of the Moabites, Zidonians, etc., etc.! And was not such idolatry a proof of the grossest stupidity? How few proofs does his life give that the gracious purpose of God was fulfilled in him! He received much; but he would have received much more, had he been faithful to the grace given. No character in the sacred writings disappoints us more than the character of Solomon.

***None like thee before thee*** That is, no king, either in Israel or among the nations, as the following verse explains.

**Verse 16. *Then came there two women-harlots*** The word זִנוֹת *zonoth*, which we here, and in some other places, improperly translate harlots, is by the Chaldee (the best judge in this case) rendered פּוֹנְדָקַי *pundekayan*, tavern-keepers. (See on Joshua 2:1.) If these had been harlots, it is not likely they would have dared to appear before Solomon; and if they had been common women, it is not likely they would have had children; nor is it likely that such persons would have been permitted under the reign of David. Though there is no mention of their husbands, it is probable they might have been at this time in other parts, following their necessary occupations; and the settling the present business could not have been delayed till their return; the appeal to justice must be made immediately.

**Verse 25. *Divide the living child in two*** This was apparently a very strange decision, and such as nothing could vindicate had it been carried

into execution; but Solomon saw that the only way to find out the real mother was by the affection and tenderness which she would necessarily show to her offspring. He plainly saw that the real mother would rather relinquish her claim to her child than see it hewn in pieces before her eyes, while it was probable the pretender would see this with indifference. He therefore orders such a mode of trial as would put the maternal affection of the real mother to the utmost proof; the plan was tried, and it succeeded. This was a proof of his sound judgment, penetration, and acquaintance with human nature; but surely it is not produced as a proof of extraordinary and supernatural wisdom. We have several similar decisions even among heathens.

Suetonius, in his life of the Emperor Claudius, cap. xv., whom he celebrates for his wonderful sagacity and penetration on some particular occasions, tells us, that this emperor discovered a woman to be the mother of a certain young man, whom she refused to acknowledge as her son, by commanding her to marry him, the proofs being doubtful on both sides; for, rather than commit this incest, she confessed the truth. His words are: *Feminam, non agnoscentem filium suum, dubia utrinque argumentorum fide, ad confessionem compulit, indicto matrimonio juvenis.*

Ariopharnes, king of Thrace, being appointed to decide between three young men, who each professed to be the son of the deceased king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the crown in consequence, found out the real son by commanding each to shoot an arrow into the body of the dead king: two of them did this without hesitation, the third refused, and was therefore judged by Ariopharnes to be the real son of the deceased. Grotius, on this place, quotes this relation from Diodorus Siculus; I quote this on his authority, but have not been able to find the place in Diodorus. This is a parallel case to that in the text; a covert appeal was made to the principle of affection; and the truth was discovered, as in the case of the mother of the living child.

**Verse 28. *They feared the king*** This decision proved that they could not impose upon him; and they were afraid to do those things which might bring them before his judgment-seat.

***They saw that the wisdom of God was in him*** They perceived that he was taught of God, judged impartially, and could not be deceived. What was

done to the other woman we are not told; justice certainly required that she should be punished for her lies and fraud.

## CHAPTER 4

*An account of Solomon's chief officers, 1-6. Names of the twelve officers that were over twelve districts, to provide victuals for the king's household monthly, 7-19. Judah and Israel are very populous; and Solomon reigns over many provinces, 20, 21. The daily provision for his family, 22, 23. The extent and peace of his dominions, 24, 25. His horses, chariots, and dromedaries; with the provision made for them, 26-28. His wisdom and understanding, 29-31. The number of his proverbs and songs; and his knowledge in natural history, 32, 33. People from all nations come to hear his wisdom, 34.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 2. *These were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest.*** These were his great, chief, or principal men. None of them were princes in the common acceptance of the word.

**Verse 3. *Elihoreph and Ahiah-scribes*** Secretaries to the king.

***Jehoshaphat-recorder*** Historiographer to the king, who chronicled the affairs of the kingdom. He was in this office under David see 2 Samuel 20:24.

**Verse 5. *Azariah-was over the officers*** He had the superintendence of the twelve officers mentioned below; see 1 Kings 4:7.

***Zabud-was principal officer*** Perhaps what we call premier, or prime minister.

***The king's friend*** His chief favourite-his confidant.

**Verse 6. *Ahishar was over the household*** the king's chamberlain.

***Adoniram-was over the tribute.*** What we call chancellor of the exchequer. He received and brought into the treasury all the proceeds of taxes and tributes. He was in this office under David; see 2 Samuel 20:24.

**Verse 7. *Twelve officers*** The business of these twelve officers was to provide daily, each for a month, those provisions which were consumed in the king's household; see 1 Kings 4:22, 23. And the task for such a daily provision was not an easy one.

**Verse 13. *Threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars*** These were fortified cities: their gates and bars covered with plates of brass. Such were the gates in Priam's palace:—

*Ipse inter primos correpta dura bipenni  
Limina perrumpit, POSTES que a cardine vellit*

AERATOS. VIRG. AEn., lib. ii. ver. 479.

*Fierce Pyrrhus in the front, with forceful sway,  
Plied the huge axe, and hew'd the beams away;  
The solid timbers from the portal tore,  
And rent from every hinge the BRAZEN door.*

PITT.

**Verse 20. *Eating and drinking, and making merry.*** They were very comfortable, very rich, very merry, and very corrupt. And this full feeding and dissipation led to a total corruption of manners.

**Verse 21. *Solomon reigned over all kingdoms*** The meaning of this verse appears to be, that Solomon reigned over all the provinces from the river Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, even to the frontiers of Egypt. The Euphrates was on the east of Solomon's dominions; the Philistines were westward on the Mediterranean sea; and Egypt was on the south. Solomon had, therefore, as tributaries, the kingdoms of Syria, Damascus, Moab, and Ammon, which lay between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. See Calmet. Thus he appears to have possessed all the land that God covenanted with Abraham to give to his posterity.

**Verse 22.** Solomon's provision for one day:—

Of fine flour . . . . . 30 measures, or cors.

Of meal . . . . . 60 ditto.

Stall-fed oxen. . . . . 10

Ditto from the pasture. . 20

Sheep . . . . . 100; with harts, roebucks, fallow deer, and fat fowls.

The **כר** cor was the same as the homer, and contained nearly seventy-six gallons, wine measure, according to Bishop Cumberland.

**Sheep** **צא** tson, comprehending both sheep and goats.

**Harts** **מאיל** meaiyal, the deer.

**Roebucks** **צבי** tsebi, the gazal, antelope, or wild goat.

**Fallow deer** **יחמור** yachmur, the buffalo. See the notes on Deuteronomy 12:15; 14:5.

**Fatted fowl.** **ברברים אבוסים** barburim abusim, I suppose, means all the wild fowls in season during each month. Michaelis derives **ברברים** barburim from **ברא** bara, which in Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, signifies a field, a desert; all that is without the cities and habitations of men: hence **חיות ברא** cheyvath bara, wild beasts, Daniel 2:38, **תור בר** tor bar, wild bull; and therefore barburim may signify creatures living in the fields, woods, and deserts, which are taken by hunting, and opposed to those which are domesticated; and, consequently, may include beasts as well as fowls. Many have translated the word capons; but, query, was any such thing known among the ancient Jews? Solomon's table, therefore, was spread with all the necessaries and delicacies which the house or the field could afford.

But how immense must the number of men have been who were fed daily at the palace of the Israelitish king! Vilalpandus computes the number to be not less than forty-eight thousand, six hundred; and Calvisius makes, by estimation from the consumption of food, fifty-four thousand! These must have included all his guards, each of whom received a ration from the king's store.

**Verse 25. Every man under his vine** They were no longer obliged to dwell in fortified cities for fear of their enemies; they spread themselves over all the country, which they everywhere cultivated; and had always the privilege of eating the fruits of their own labors. This is the meaning of the phrase.

**Verse 26. *Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses-and twelve thousand horsemen.*** In 2 Chronicles 9:25, instead of forty thousand stalls, we read four thousand; and even this number might be quite sufficient to hold horses for twelve thousand horsemen; for stalls and stables may be here synonymous. In 1 Kings 10:26 it is said he had one thousand four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; and this is the reading in 2 Chronicles 1:14. In 2 Chronicles 9:25, already quoted, instead of forty thousand stalls for horses, the Septuagint has τεσσαρες χιλιαδες θηλειαι ιπποι, four thousand mares; and in this place the whole verse is omitted both by the Syriac and Arabic. In the Targum of Rabbi Joseph on this book we have ארבע מאה arba meah, four hundred, instead of the four thousand in Chronicles, and the forty thousand in the text. From this collation of parallel places we may rest satisfied that there is a corruption in the numbers somewhere; and as a sort of medium, we may take for the whole four thousand stalls, one thousand four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

**Verse 28. *And dromedaries*** The word רכש rechesh, which we translate thus, is rendered beasts, or beasts of burden, by the Vulgate; mares by the Syriac and Arabic; chariots by the Septuagint; and race-horses by the Chaldee. The original word seems to signify a very swift kind of horse, and race-horse or post-horse is probably its true meaning. To communicate with so many distant provinces, Solomon had need of many animals of this kind.

**Verse 29. *God gave Solomon wisdom, etc.*** He gave him a capacious mind, and furnished him with extraordinary assistance to cultivate it.

***Even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.*** Lord Bacon observes on this: “As the sand on the sea-shore encloses a great body of waters, so Solomon’s mind contained an ocean of knowledge.” This is a happy and correct illustration.

**Verse 30. *The children of the east country*** That is the Chaldeans, Persians, and Arabians, who, with the Egyptians, were famed for wisdom and knowledge through all the world.

**Verse 31. *He was wiser than all men*** He was wiser than any of those who were most celebrated in his time, among whom were the four after



mentioned, viz., Ethan, Heman, Chalcol, and Darda. Ethan was probably the same as is mentioned in some of the Psalms, particularly Psalm 89:1, title; and among the singers in 1 Chronicles 6:42. There is a Heman mentioned in the title to Psalm 88:1. In 1 Chronicles 2:6 we have all the four names, but they are probably not the same persons, for they are there said to be the sons of Zerah, and he flourished long before Solomon's time.

Some suppose that **בני מחול** beney machol should be rendered masters of dancing or music, as **מחול** machol signifies not only a dance or choir, but also an instrument of music of the pipe kind. Perhaps a reference is here made to Solomon's skill in music and poetry, as he is compared to persons who appear to have been eminent poets and musicians.

**Verse 32. *He spake three thousand proverbs*** The book of Proverbs, attributed to Solomon, contain only about nine hundred or nine hundred and twenty-three distinct proverbs; and if we grant with some that the first nine chapters are not the work of Solomon, then all that can be attributed to him is only about six hundred and fifty.

Of all his one thousand and five songs or poems we have only one, the book of Canticles, remaining, unless we include Psalm 127:1-5, Except the Lord build the house, etc., which in the title is said to be by or for him, though it appears more properly to be a psalm of direction, left him by his father David, relative to the building of the temple.

**Verse 33. *He spake of trees-beasts-fowl-creeping things, and of fishes.*** This is a complete system of natural history, as far as relates to the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and the first intimation we have of any thing of the kind: Solomon was probably the first natural historian in the world.

O, how must the heart of Tournefort, Ray, Linne, Buffon, Cuvier, Swammerdam, Blosch, and other naturalists, be wrung, to know that these works of Solomon are all and for ever lost! What light should we have thrown on the animal and vegetable kingdoms, had these works been preserved! But the providence of God has not thought fit to preserve them, and succeeding naturalists are left to invent the system which he probably left perfect. If there be any remains of his wisdom, they must be sought among the orientals, among whom his character is well known, and rates as high as it does with either Jews or Christians. I shall give some

extracts from their works relative to Solomon when I come to consider his character at the end of 1 Kings 11:43.

**Verse 34. *There came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon*** We learn from 1 Kings 10, that the queen of Sheba was one of those visitants, and perhaps the most remarkable, as we have the particulars of her visit, but not of the others.

It is astonishing that of a person so renowned for wisdom, so little should be left to prove the truth of a fact of which all the civilized nations of the world have heard, and of which scarcely any man has ever doubted. The people that came from all kings of the earth were probably ambassadors, who came to form and maintain friendship between their sovereigns and the Israelitish king. We cannot understand the place as speaking of people who, either through an idle or laudable curiosity, came to see and converse with Solomon; to give free access to such people would ill comport with the maintenance of his dignity.

## CHAPTER 5

*Hiram, king of Tyre, sends to congratulate Solomon on his accession to the kingdom, 1. Solomon consults him on building a temple for the Lord, and requests his assistance, 2-6. Hiram is pleased and specifies the assistance which he will afford, 7-9. He sends cedars and fir trees, 10. The return made by Solomon, 11. They form a league, 12. Solomon makes a levy of men in Israel to prepare wood and stones, 13-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *Hiram king of Tyre*** It must have been at the beginning of Solomon's reign that these ambassadors were sent; and some suppose that the Hiram mentioned here is different from him who was the friend of David; but there seems no very solid reason for this supposition. As Hiram had intimate alliance with David, and built his palace, 2 Samuel 5:11, he wished to maintain the same good understanding with his son, of whose wisdom he had no doubt heard the most advantageous accounts; and he loved the son because he always loved the father, for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

**Verse 2. *Solomon sent to Hiram*** Made an interchange of ambassadors and friendly greetings. Josephus tells us that the correspondence between Hiram and Solomon was preserved in the archives of the Tyrians even in his time. But this, like many other assertions of the same author, is worthy of little credit.

**Verse 4. *There is neither adversary*** עֵי שָׂטָן eyn satan, there is no satan-no opposer, nor any kind of evil; all is peace and quiet, both without and within. God has given me this quiet that I may build his temple. Deus nobis haec otia fecit.

**Verse 5. *A house unto the name of the Lord*** The name of God is God himself. I purpose to build a house to that infinite and eternal Being called Jehovah.

**Verse 6. *Any that can skill to hew timber*** An obsolete and barbarous expression for any that know how to cut timber. They had neither sawyers, carpenters, joiners, nor builders among them, equal to the Sidonians. Sidon was a part of the territories of Hiram, and its inhabitants appear to have been the most expert workmen. It requires more skill to fell and prepare timber than is generally supposed. Vitruvius gives some rules relative to this, lib. ii., cap. 9, the sum of which is this: 1. Trees should be felled in autumn, or in the winter, and in the wane of the moon; for in this season the trees recover their vigor and solidity, which was dispersed among their leaves, and exhausted by their fruit, in spring and summer; they will then be free from a certain moisture, very apt to engender worms and rot them, which in autumn and winter is consumed and dried up. 2. Trees should not be cut down at once; they should be cut carefully round towards the pith, that the sap may drop down and distil away, and thus left till thoroughly dry, and then cut down entirely. 3. When fully dried, a tree should not be exposed to the south sun, high winds, and rain; and should be smeared over with cow-dung to prevent its splitting. 4. It should never be drawn through the dew, but be removed in the afternoon. 5. It is not fit for floors, doors, or windows, till it has been felled three years. Perhaps these directions attended to, would prevent the dry rot. And we see from them that there is considerable skill required to hew timber, and in this the Sidonians excelled. We do every thing in a hurry, and our building is good for nothing.

**Verse 7. *Blessed be the Lord this day*** From this, and indeed from every part of Hiram's conduct, it is evident that he was a worshipper of the true God; unless, as was the case with many of the heathens, he supposed that every country had its own god, and every god his own country, and he thanked the God of Israel that he had given so wise a prince to govern those whom he considered his friends and allies: but the first opinion seems to be the most correct.

**Verse 9. *Shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea*** As the river Adonis was in the vicinity of the forest of Lebanon, and emptied itself into the Mediterranean sea, near Biblos, Hiram could transport the timber all squared, and not only cut to scantling, but cut so as to occupy the place it was intended for in the building, without any farther need of axe or saw. It might be readily sent down the coast on rafts and landed at Joppa, or

Jamnia, just opposite to Jerusalem, at the distance of about twenty-five miles. See 2 Chronicles 2:16. The carriage could not be great, as the timber was all fitted for the building where it was hewn down. The materials had only to be put together when they arrived at Jerusalem. See 1 Kings 6:7.

**Verse 11. *And Solomon gave Hiram, etc.*** The information in this verse of the annual stipend paid to Hiram, is deficient, and must be supplied out of 2 Chronicles 2:10. Here twenty thousand measures of wheat, and twenty measures of pure oil, is all that is promised: there, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, twenty thousand measures of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil, is the stipulation; unless we suppose the first to be for Hiram's own family, the latter for his workmen. Instead of twenty measures of oil, the Syriac, Arabic, and Septuagint, have twenty thousand measures, as in Chronicles. In 2 Chron., instead of cors of oil, it is baths. The bath was a measure much less than the cor.

**Verse 13. *The levy was thirty thousand men.*** We find from the following verse that only ten thousand were employed at once, and those only for one month at a time; and having rested two months, they again resumed their labor. These were the persons over whom Adoniram was superintendent, and were all Israelites.

**Verse 15. *Threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens*** These were all strangers, or proselytes, dwelling among the Israelites; as we learn from the parallel place, 2 Chronicles 2:17, 18.

**Verse 16. *Besides-three thousand and three hundred which ruled over the people*** In the parallel place, 2 Chronicles 2:18, it is three thousand six hundred. The Septuagint has here the same number.

**Verse 17. *Great stones*** Stones of very large dimensions.

***Costly stones*** Stones that cost much labor and time to cut them out of the rock.

***Hewed stones*** Everywhere squared and polished.

**Verse 18. *And the stone-squarers*** Instead of stone-squarers the margin very properly reads Giblites, הגבליים haggiblim; and refers to Ezekiel

27:9, where we find the inhabitants of Gebal celebrated for their knowledge in ship-building. Some suppose that these Giblites were the inhabitants of Biblos, at the foot of Mount Libanus, northward of Sidon, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea; famous for its wines; and now called Gaeta. Both Ptolemy and Stephanus Byzantinus speak of a town called Gebala, to the east of Tyre: but this was different from Gebal, or Biblos. It seems more natural to understand this of a people than of stone-squarers, though most of the versions have adopted this idea which we follow in the text.

## CHAPTER 6

*In the four hundred and eightieth year from the exodus, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and in the second month, he laid the foundations of the temple; the length sixty cubits, the breadth twenty, and the height thirty cubits; besides the porch, which was twenty cubits in length, and ten cubits in height, 1-3. A description of its different external parts, 4-10. God's promise to Solomon, 11-13. Description of its internal parts and contents, 14-36. Temple finished in the eighth month of the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, being seven years in building, 37, 38.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1.** *In the four hundred and eightieth year* The Septuagint has the four hundred and fortieth year. It need scarcely be noticed, that among chronologists there is a great difference of opinion concerning this epocha. Glycas has 330 years; Melchior Canus, 590 years; Josephus, 592 years; Sulpicius Severus, 588; Clemens Alexandrinus, 570; Cedrenus, 672; Codomanus, 598; Vossius and Capellus, 580; Serarius, 680; Nicholas Abraham, 527; Maestlinus, 592; Petavius and Valtherus, 520. Here are more than a dozen different opinions; and after all, that in the common Hebrew text is as likely to be the true one as any of the others.

**The month Zif** This answers to a part of our April and May; and was the second month of the sacred year, but the eighth month of the civil year. Before the time of Solomon, the Jews do not appear to have had any names for their months, but mentioned them in the order of their consecutive occurrence, first month, second month, third month, etc. In this chapter we find Zif and Bul; and in 1 Kings 8:2, we find another, Ethanim; and these are supposed to be borrowed from the Chaldeans; and consequently this book was written after the Babylonish captivity. Before this time we find only the word Abib mentioned as the name of a month, Exodus 13:4. Whether there were any others at that time, or whether Abib was really intended as the name of a month, we cannot absolutely say. The

present names of the Hebrew months are:-Tisri, answering to a part of September and October, Marchesvan, Cisleu, Tebeth, Shebat, Adar, Nisan, Ijar, Sivan, Tamuz, Ab, and Elul.

**Verse 2. *The length thereof was threescore cubits*** A cubit, according to Bishop Cumberland, is 21 inches, and 888 decimals, or 1 foot, 9 inches, and 888 decimals.

Yds. Ft. Inch. According to this, the length,	
60 cubits, was	36 1 5.28
The breadth, 20 cubits, was	12 0 5.76
The height, 30 cubits, was	18 0 8.64

This constituted what was called the temple or house, the house of God, etc. But, besides this, there were courts and colonnades, where the people might assemble to perform their devotions and assist at the sacrifices, without being exposed to the open air. The court surrounded the temple, or holy place, into which the priests alone entered. Sometimes the whole of the building is called the temple; at other times that, the measurement of which is given above. But as no proper account can be given of such a building in notes; and as there is a great variety of opinion concerning the temple, its structure, ornaments, etc., as mentioned in the books of Kings and Chronicles, in Ezekiel, and by Josephus; and as modern writers, such as Vilalpandus, Dr. Lightfoot, and Dr. Prideaux, professing to be guided by the same principles, have produced very different buildings; I think it best to hazard nothing on the subject, but give that description at the end of the chapter which Calmet with great pains and industry has collected: at the same time, pledging myself to no particular form or appearance, as I find I cannot give any thing as the likeness of Solomon's temple which I could say, either in honor or conscience, bears any affinity to it. For other particulars I must refer the reader to the three large volumes of Vilalpandus, Dr. Lightfoot's Works, and to the Connections of Dr. Prideaux.

**Verse 4. *Windows of narrow lights*.** The Vulgate says, fenestras obliquas, oblique windows; but what sort of windows could such be?

The Hebrew is חלונני שקפים אטמים challoney shekuphim atumim, windows to look through, which shut. Probably latticed windows:



windows through which a person within could see well; but a person without, nothing. Windows, says the Targum, which were open within and shut without. Does he mean windows with shutters; or, are we to understand, with the Arabic, windows opening wide within, and narrow on the outside; such as we still see in ancient castles? This sense our margin expresses. We hear nothing of glass or any other diaphanous substance. Windows, perhaps originally windore, a door to let the wind in, in order to ventilate the building, and through which external objects might be discerned.

**Verse 7. *The house-was built of stone*** It appears that every stone was hewn and squared, and its place in the building ascertained, before it came to Jerusalem: the timbers were fitted in like manner. This greatly lessened the trouble and expense of carriage. On this account, that all was prepared at Mount Lebanon, there was neither hammer, axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the building; nothing except mallets to drive the tenons into the mortises, and drive in the pins to fasten them, was necessary: therefore there was no noise. But why is this so particularly marked? Is it not because the temple was a type of the kingdom of God; and the souls of men are to be prepared here for that place of blessedness? There, there is no preaching, exhortations, repentance, ears, cries, nor prayers; the stones must be all squared and fitted here for their place in the New Jerusalem, and, being living stones, must be built up a holy temple for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

**Verse 9. *Covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.*** The Eastern custom is very different from ours: we ceil with plaster, and make our floors of wood; they make their floors of plaster or painted tiles, and make their ceilings of wood. But it may not be improper to observe that, in ancient times, our buildings were somewhat similar. Westminster Hall is a proof of this.

**Verse 11. *The word of the Lord came to Solomon*** Some think that this is the same revelation as that mentioned 1 Kings 9:2, etc., which took place after the dedication of the temple: but to me it appears different; it was a word to encourage him while building; to warn him against apostasy, and to assure him of God's continued protection of him and his family, if they continued faithful to the grace which God had given.

**Verse 15. *The walls of the ceiling*** See the note on 1 Kings 6:9.

**Verse 19. *The oracle he prepared*** See the description of the temple at the end of this chapter. {1 Kings 6:38}

**Verse 22. *The whole house he overlaid with gold*** It is impossible to calculate this expense, or the quantity of gold employed in this sacred building.

**Verse 26. *The height of the one cherub was ten cubits*** Concerning the cherubs, their form, etc., see my note on Exodus 25:18. The height of each cherub was about eighteen feet and three inches.

**Verse 36. *Three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.*** Does not this intimate that there were three courses of stone, and then one course of timber all through this wall? Three strata of stone and one stratum of timber, and so on. If so, could such a building be very durable? This is also referred to in the succeeding chapter, 1 Kings 7:11; and as both the temple and Solomon's house were built in the same manner, we may suppose that this was the ordinary way in which the better sort of buildings were constructed. Calmet thinks that to this mode of building the prophet alludes, Habakkuk 2:11: The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. But it should be observed that this was in the inner court, and therefore the timber was not exposed to the weather. The outer court does not appear to have been built stratum super stratum of stone and wood.

**Verse 38. *In the eleventh year-was the house finished*** It is rather strange that this house required seven years and about six months to put all the stones and the timbers in their places, for we have already seen that they were all prepared before they came to Jerusalem; but the ornamenting, gilding, or overlaying with gold, making the carved work, cherubim, trees, flowers, etc., must have consumed a considerable time. The month Bul answers to a part of our October and November, as Zif, in which it was begun, answers to a part of April and May.

The dedication did not take place till the following year, the twelfth of Solomon, because Then, according to Archbishop Usher, the jubilee happened.

*So was he seven years in building it.* Properly seven years and six months; but the Scripture generally expresses things in round numbers.

DIANA'S temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world. It is said that almost all Asia was employed in the building of it for about two hundred years; but it was certainly more extensive than the temple at Jerusalem, for it may be justly questioned, notwithstanding the profusion of gold, silver, precious stones, etc., employed in the temple of Solomon, whether it cost any thing like the money expended on the temple of Diana.

Pliny informs us, Hist. Nat., lib. xxxvi., cap. 12, that, in order to build one of the pyramids in Egypt, no less than three hundred and sixty thousand men were employed for the space of twenty years. But neither was the temple any such work as this. We may also observe that the temple was never intended to hold a vast concourse of people; it was only for the service of the Lord, and the priests were those alone who were employed in it. The courts, chambers, and other apartments, were far more extensive than the temple itself; it was never designed to be a place to worship in, but a place to worship at. There God was known to have a peculiar residence, and before him the tribes came, and the priests were a sort of mediators between him and the people. In short, the temple was to the Jews in the promised land what the tabernacle was to the Hebrews in the wilderness; the place where God's honor dwelt, and whither the people flocked to pay their adoration.

“Solomon laid the foundation of the temple in the year of the world 2992, before Christ 1008, before the vulgar era, 1012; and it was finished in the year of the world 3000, and dedicated in 3001, before Christ 999, before the vulgar era 1003; 1 Kings 8:1 etc.; 2 Chronicles 5:1; 7:1; 8:1 etc. The place that was pitched on for erecting this magnificent structure was on the side of Mount Sion called Moriah. Its entrance or frontispiece stood towards the east, and the most holy or most retired part was towards the west. The author of the first book of Kings, and of the second of Chronicles has chiefly made it his business to describe the temple properly so called, that is the sanctuary, the sanctum, and the apartments belonging to them, as also the vessels, the implements, and the ornaments of the temple, without giving any description scarcely of the courts and open

areas, which, however, made a principal part of the grandeur of this august edifice.

“But Ezekiel has supplied this defect by the exact plan he has delineated of these necessary parts. Indeed it must be owned that the temple as described by Ezekiel was never restored after the captivity of Babylon, according to the model and the mensuration that this prophet has given of it. But as the measures he sets down for the sanctum and the sanctuary are, within a small matter, the same as those of the temple of Solomon; and as this prophet, who was himself a priest, had seen the first temple; it is to be supposed that the description he gives us of the temple of Jerusalem is the same as that of the temple of Solomon.

“The ground-plot upon which the temple was built was a square of six hundred cubits, or twenty-five thousand royal feet; Ezekiel 45:1 etc. This space was encompassed with a wall of the height of six cubits, and of the same breadth. Beyond this wall was the court of the Gentiles, being fifty cubits wide. After this was seen a great wall, which encompassed the whole court of the children of Israel. This wall was a square of five hundred cubits. The court of Israel was a hundred cubits square, and was encompassed all round with magnificent galleries supported by two or three rows of pillars. It had four gates or entrances; one to the east, another to the west, a third to the north, and the fourth to the south. They were all of the same form and largeness, and each had an ascent of seven steps. The court was paved with marble of divers colors, and had no covering; but the people in case of need could retire under the galleries that were all round about. These apartments were to lodge the priests in, and to lay up such things as were necessary for the use of the temple. There were but three ways to come in, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and they went to it by an ascent of eight steps. Before, and over against the gate of the court of the priests, in the court of Israel, was erected a throne for the king, being a magnificent alcove, where the king seated himself when he came into the temple. Within the court of the priests, and over against the same eastern gate, was the altar of burnt-offerings, of twelve cubits square, according to Ezekiel 43:16, or of ten cubits high and twenty broad, according to 2 Chronicles 4:1. They went up to it by stairs on the eastern side.

“Beyond this, and to the west of the altar of burnt-offerings was the temple, properly so called, that is to say, the sanctuary, the sanctum, and the porch of entrance. The porch was twenty cubits wide and six cubits deep. Its gate was fourteen cubits wide. The sanctum was forty cubits wide and twenty deep. There stood the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the golden altar, upon which the incense was offered. The sanctuary was a square of twenty cubits. There was nothing in the sanctuary but the ark of the covenant, which included the tables of the law. The high priest entered here but once a year, and none but himself was allowed to enter. Solomon had embellished the inside of this holy place with palm trees in relief, and cherubim of wood covered with plates of gold, and in general the whole sanctuary was adorned, and as it were overlaid, with plates of gold.

“Round the sanctum and sanctuary were three stories of chambers, to the number of thirty-three. Ezekiel makes them but four cubits wide; but the first book of Kings, 1 Kings 6:6, allows five cubits to the first story, six to the second, and seven to the third.

“Since the consecration or dedication of the temple by Solomon in the year of the world 3001, this edifice has suffered many revolutions, which it is proper to take notice of here.

“In the year of the world 3033, before Christ 967, before the vulgar era 971, Shishak, king of Egypt, having declared war with Rehoboam, king of Judah, took Jerusalem, and carried away the treasures of the temple; 1 Kings 14:25, 26; 2 Chronicles 12:1-9.

“In 3146, Jehoash, king of Judah, got silver together to go upon the repairs of the temple; they began to work upon it in earnest in 3148, before Christ

seen at Damascus, and taking away the brazen altar that Solomon had made; 2 Kings 16:10-12, etc. He also took away the brazen sea from off the brazen oxen that supported it, and the brazen basons from their pedestals, and the king's throne or oratory, which was of brass. These he took away to prevent their being carried away by the king of Assyria. Nor did he stop here, but carried his wickedness so far as to sacrifice to strange gods, and to erect profane altars in all the corners of the streets of Jerusalem; 2 Chronicles 28:24, 25. He pillaged the temple of the Lord, broke the sacred vessels, and, lastly, shut up the house of God. This happened in the year of the world 3264, before Christ 736, before the vulgar era 740, to his death, which happened in 3278, before Christ 722, before the vulgar era 726.

“Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz, opened again and repaired the gates of the temple which his father had shut up and robbed of their ornaments; 2 Chronicles 29:3, 4, etc., in the year of the world 3278, before Christ 722, before the vulgar era 726. He restored the worship of the Lord and the sacrifices, and made new sacred vessels in the place of those that Ahaz had destroyed. But in the fourteenth year of his reign, 2 Kings 18:15, 16, in the year of the world 3291, before Christ 709, before the vulgar era 713, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, coming with an army into the land of Judah, Hezekiah was forced to take all the riches of the temple, and even the plates of gold that he himself had put upon the gates of the temple, and give them to the king of Assyria. But when Sennacherib was gone back into his own country, there is no doubt that Hezekiah restored all these things to their first condition.

“Manasseh, son and successor of Hezekiah, profaned the temple of the Lord, by setting up altars to all the host of heaven, even in the courts of the house of the Lord; 2 Kings 21:4-7; 2 Chronicles 33:5-7; in the year of the world 3306, and the following years. He set up idols there, and worshipped them. God delivered him into the hands of the king of Babylon, who loaded him with chains, and carried him away beyond the Euphrates; 2 Chronicles 33:11, 12, etc.; in the year of the world 3328, before Christ 672, before the vulgar era 676. There he acknowledged and repented of his sins; and being sent back to his own dominions, he redressed the profanations he had made of the temple of the Lord, by

taking away the idols, destroying the profane altars, and restoring the altar of burnt-offering, upon which he offered his sacrifices.

“Josiah, king of Judah, labored with all his might in repairing the edifices of the temple, (2 Kings 22:4-6, etc.; 2 Chronicles 34:8-10; in the year of the world 3380, before Christ 620, before the vulgar era 624,) which had been either neglected or demolished by the kings of Judah, his predecessors. He also commanded the priests and Levites to replace the ark of the Lord in the sanctuary, in its appointed place; and ordered that it should not any more be removed from place to place as it had been during the reigns of the wicked kings, his predecessors, 2 Chronicles 35:3.

“Nebuchadnezzar took away a part of the sacred vessels of the temple of the Lord, and placed them in the temple of his god at Babylon, under the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah; 2 Chronicles 36:6, 7, in the year of the world 3398, before Christ 602, before the vulgar era 606. He also carried away others under the reign of Jehoiachin, 2 Chronicles 36:10; in the year of the world 3405, before Christ 595, before the vulgar era 599. Lastly, he took the city of Jerusalem, and entirely destroyed the temple, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the year of the world 3416, before Christ 584, before the vulgar era 588; 2 Kings 25:1-3, etc.; 2 Chronicles 36:18, 19.

“The temple continued buried in its ruins for the space of fifty-two years, till the first year of Cyrus at Babylon, in the year of the world 3468, before Christ 532, before the vulgar era 536. Then Cyrus gave permission to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and there to rebuild the temple of the Lord, Ezra 1:1-3, etc. The following year they laid the foundation of the second temple; but they had hardly been at work upon it one year, when either Cyrus or his officers, being gained over by the enemies of the Jews, forbade them to go on with their work; Ezra 4:5; in the year of the world 3470, before Christ 530, before the vulgar era 534. After the death of Cyrus and Cambyses, they were again forbidden by the magian, who reigned after Cambyses, and whom the Scripture calls by the name of Artaxerxes; Ezra 4:7, 17, 18, etc.; in the year of the world 3483, before Christ 517, before the vulgar era 521. Lastly, these prohibitions being superseded, under the reign of Darius, son of Hystaspes, (Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Haggai 1:1, etc.; in the year of the world 3485, before Christ 515, before the vulgar era 519,) the temple was finished and dedicated four years after,

in the year of the world 3489, before Christ 511, before the vulgar era 515, twenty years after the return from the captivity.

“This temple was profaned by order of Antiochus Epiphanes in the year of the world 3837. The ordinary sacrifices were discontinued therein, and the idol of Jupiter Olympus was set up upon the altar. It continued in this condition for three years; then Judas Maccabeus purified it, and restored the sacrifice and the worship of the Lord, 1 Mac. iv. 36; in the year of the world 8840, before Christ 160, before the vulgar era 164.

“Herod the Great undertook to rebuild the whole temple of Jerusalem anew, in the eighteenth year of his reign, and in the year of the world 3986; Joseph., *Antiq.*, lib. xv., cap. 14. He began to lay the foundation of it in the year of the world 3987, forty-six years before the first passover of Jesus Christ, as the Jews observe to him by saying, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? John 2:20. This is not saying that Herod had employed six and forty years in building it; for Josephus assures us that he finished it in nine years and a half; Joseph., *Antiq.*, lib. xv., cap. 14. But, after the time of this prince, they all continued to make some new addition to it; and the same Josephus tells us that they went on working upon it, even to the beginning of the Jewish war; Joseph., *Antiq.*, lib. xx., cap. 8.

“This temple, built by Herod, did not subsist more than seventy-seven years, being destroyed in the year of the world 4073, of Christ 73, of the vulgar era 69. It was begun by Herod in 3987, finished in 3996, burnt and destroyed by the Romans in 4073.

“This temple of Herod was very different from that of Solomon, and from that which was rebuilt by Zerubbabel after the captivity. This is the description that Josephus has left us of it, who himself had seen it:—

“The temple, properly so called, was built sixty cubits high, and as many broad; but there were two sides of front, like two arms or shoulderings, which advanced twenty cubits on each side, which gave in the whole front a hundred cubits wide, as well as in height. The stones made use of in this building were white and hard, twenty-five cubits long, eight in height, and twelve in width; Joseph., *de Bell.*, lib. vi., p. 917.



“The front of this magnificent building resembled that of a royal palace. The two extremes of each face were lower than the middle, which middle was so exalted that those who were over against the temple, or that approached towards it at a distance, might see it, though they were many furlongs from it. The gates were almost of the same height as the temple; and on the top of the gates were veils or tapestry of several colors, embellished with purple flowers. On the two sides of the doors were two pillars, the cornices of which were adorned with the branches of a golden vine, which hung down with their grapes and clusters, and were so well imitated, that art did not at all yield to nature. Herod made very large and very high galleries about the temple, which were suitable to the magnificence of the rest of the building, and exceeded in beauty and sumptuousness all of the kind that had been seen before.

“The temple was built upon a very irregular mountain, and at first there was hardly place enough on the top of it for the site of the temple and altar. The rest of it was steep and sloping: Joseph., de Bell, lib. vi., p. 915, [εκφιδ.](#); Antiq., lib. xv., c. 14. But when King Solomon built it, he raised a wall towards the east, to support the earth on that side; and after this side was filled up, he then built one of the porticoes or galleries. At that time this face only was cased with stone, but in succeeding times, the people endeavoring to enlarge this space, and the top of the mountain being much extended, they broke down the wall which was on the north side, and enclosed another space as large as that which the whole circumference of the temple contained at first. So that at last, against all hope and expectation, this work was carried so far that the whole mountain was surrounded by a treble wall. But, for the completing of this great work whole ages were no more than sufficient; and all the sacred treasures were applied to this use, that the devotion of the people had brought to the temple from all the provinces of the world. In some places these walls were above three hundred cubits high, and the stones used in these walls were some forty cubits long. They were fastened together by iron cramps and lead, to be able to resist the injuries of time. The platform on which the temple was built was a furlong square, or one hundred and twenty-five paces.” Thus far Calmet and Josephus.

## CHAPTER 7

*Solomon builds his own house, and completes it in thirteen years, 1. He builds another called the house of the forest of Lebanon; and a house for Pharaoh's daughter, 2-12. He brings Hiram, a coppersmith, out of Tyre, who makes much curious work for the temple, 13-20. He makes the two pillars Jachin and Boaz, 21, 22. The molten sea, and the twelve oxen that bare it, 23-26. And ten brazen bases, and the ten lavers with pots, shovels, and basons, all of which he cast in the plain of Jordan, 27-46. The quantity of brass too great to be weighed; and the vessels of the temple were all of pure gold, 47-50. Solomon brings into the house the silver and gold which his father had dedicated, 51.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1. *Building his own house*** This house is said to have been situated in Jerusalem, and probably was, what some call it, his winter's residence. It is called the king's house, 1 Kings 9:10.

**Verse 2. *The house of the forest of Lebanon*** It was not built in Lebanon, but is thought to have been on Mount Sion. And why it was called the house of the forest of Lebanon does not appear; probably it was because it was built almost entirely of materials brought from that place. See the following verses.

**Verse 7. *A porch for the throne*** One porch appears to have been devoted to the purposes of administering judgment, which Solomon did in person.

**Verse 8. *A house for Pharaoh's daughter*** This appears to have been a third house; probably the whole three made but one building, and were in the same place, but distinguished from each other; the first as Solomon's palace, the second as a house of judgment, a court-house; the third, the harem, or apartments for the women.

**Verse 13. *Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.*** This was not the Tyrian king, mentioned before, but a very intelligent coppersmith, of

Jewish extraction by his mother's side, who was probably married to a Tyrian. In 2 Chronicles 2:14, this woman is said to be of the daughters of Dan, but here of the tribe of Naphtali. The king of Tyre, who gives the account as we have it in Chronicles, might have made the mistake, and confounded the two tribes; or she might have been of Naphtali by her father, and of Dan by her mother, and so be indifferently called of the tribe of Naphtali or of the daughters of Dan. This appears to be the best solution of the difficulty. The versions and MSS. give no help here.

**Verse 15. *He cast two pillars-eighteen cubits high*** That is, about thirty feet in English measure.

***A line of twelve cubits*** In circumference. It would be difficult even now to procure a founder who could cast such massive pillars, whether solid or hollow.

**Verse 21. *The right pillar-Jachin*** That is, He shall establish. The left pillar-Boaz, that is, in strength. These were no doubt emblematical; for notwithstanding their names, they seem to have supported no part of the building.

**Verse 27. *He made ten bases*** That is, pedestals, for the ten lavers to rest on.

**Verse 38. *Then made he ten lavers*** These were set on the ten bases or pedestals, and were to hold water for the use of the priests in their sacred office, particularly to wash the victims that were to be offered as a burnt-offering, as we learn from 2 Chronicles 4:6; but the brazen sea was for the priests to wash in. The whole was a building of vast art, labor, and expense.

**Verse 40. *So Hiram made an end*** It is truly surprising, that in so short a time one artist could design and execute works of such magnitude, taste, and variety, however numerous his assistants might be. The mere building of the house was a matter of little difficulty in comparison of these internal works.

**Verse 46. *Cast them, in the clay ground*** In this place he found that particular kind of clay that was proper for his purpose. Some suppose

that the place where Hiram had his foundry was on the other side, some on this side, of Jordan. Calmet supposes that it was near Bethshan.

**Verse 51. *Solomon brought in the things*** It has been a question whether Solomon, in the structure of the temple, used any of the gold and silver which David had provided? And here it seems answered in the negative; for after the house was finished, with all its utensils and ornaments, with its immense profusion of gold, it is here said that Solomon brought in the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, which David his father had dedicated. It appears therefore that Solomon had employed four years to make preparation for the work before it was begun. During the whole time of the building, he was no doubt still appropriating a part of the public revenue for this purpose; and the provision made by his father he placed among the treasures of the house; but the temple was truly Solomon's, as he had provided all its materials, and borne every expense.

As the temple was built in some measure on the model of the tabernacle, and dedicated to the same use, I wish to refer the reader to the description of the former, in Exod. 25-27, and 35-39, and the notes there.

## CHAPTER 8

*Solomon assembles the elders of Israel, and brings up the ark, and the holy vessels, and the tabernacle, out of the city of David, and places them in the temple; on which account a vast number of sheep and oxen are sacrificed, 1-8. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, 9. The cloud of God's glory fills the house, 10, 11. Solomon blesses the people, 12-21. His dedicatory prayer, 22-53. Afterwards he blesses and exhorts the people, 54-61. They offer a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep, 62, 63. He hallows the middle of the court for offerings; as the brazen altar which was before the Lord was too little, 64. He holds the feast of the dedication for seven days; and for other seven days, the feast of tabernacles; and on the eighth day blesses the people, and sends them away joyful, 65, 66.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. Then Solomon assembled** It has already been observed that Solomon deferred the dedication of the temple to the following year after it was finished, because that year, according to Archbishop Usher, was a jubilee. "This," he observes, "was the ninth jubilee, opening the fourth millenary of the world, or A.M. 3001, wherein Solomon with great magnificence celebrated the dedication of the temple seven days, and the feast of tabernacles other seven days; and the celebration of the eighth day of tabernacles being finished, upon the twenty-third day of the seventh month the people were dismissed every man to his home. The eighth day of the seventh month, viz., the thirtieth of our October, being Friday, was the first of the seven days of dedication; on the tenth day, Saturday, November 1, was the fast of expiation or atonement held; whereon, according to the Levitical law, the jubilee was proclaimed by sound of trumpet. The fifteenth day, Friday, November 6, was the feast of tabernacles; the twenty-second, November 13, being also Friday, was the feast of tabernacles, which was always very solemnly kept, 2 Chronicles

7:9; Leviticus 23:36; John 7:37; and the day following, November 14, being our Saturday, when the Sabbath was ended, the people returned home.

“In the thirteenth year after the temple was built, Solomon made an end also of building his own house, having spent full twenty years upon both of them; seven and a half upon the temple, and thirteen or twelve and a half upon his own.” -Usher’s Annals, sub. A.M. 3001.

**Verse 2. *At the feast in the month Ethanim*** The feast of tabernacles, which was celebrated in the seventh month of what is called the ecclesiastical year.

**Verse 4. *They brought up-the tabernacle*** It is generally agreed that there were now two tabernacles at Gibeon, and the other in the city of David, which one David had constructed as a temporary residence for the ark, in the event of a temple being built. Which of these tabernacles was brought into the temple at this time, is not well known; some think both were brought in, in order to prevent the danger of idolatry. I should rather suppose that the tabernacle from Gibeon was brought in, and that the temporary one erected by David was demolished.

**Verse 8. *And there they are unto this day.*** This proves that the book was written before the destruction of the first temple, but how long before we cannot tell.

**Verse 9. *Save the two tables of stone*** See my notes on Hebrews 9:4.

**Verse 10. *When the priests were come out*** That is, after having carried the ark into the holy of holies, before any sacred service had yet commenced.

**Verse 11. *The glory of the Lord had filled the house*** The cloud, the symbol of the Divine glory and presence, appears to have filled not only the holy of holies, but the whole temple, court and all, and to have become evident to the people; and by this Solomon knew that God had honored the place with his presence, and taken it for his habitation in reference to the people of Israel.

**Verse 12. *The Lord said-he would dwell*** It was under the appearance of a cloud that God showed himself present with Israel in the wilderness; see Exodus 14:19, 20. And at the dedication of the tabernacle in the

wilderness, God manifested himself in the same way that he did here at the dedication of the temple; see Exodus 40:34, 35.

**Verse 13. *I have surely built thee a house*** He was now fully convinced that the thing pleased God, and that he had taken this place for his settled habitation.

**Verse 14. *Blessed all the congregation*** Though this blessing is not particularly stated, yet we may suppose that it was such as the high priest pronounced upon the people: “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee! The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee! The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!” (see Numbers 6:24-26,) for Solomon seems now to be acting the part of the high priest. But he may have in view more particularly the conduct of Moses, who, when he had seen that the people had done all the work of the tabernacle, as the Lord had commanded them, he blessed them, Exodus 39:43; and the conduct of his father David, who, when the ark had been brought into the city of David, and the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings completed, blessed the people in the name of the Lord, 2 Samuel 6:18.

**Verse 16. *Since the day, etc.*** Mention is here made, says Dr. Kennicott, of some one place and some one person preferred before all others; and the preference is that of Jerusalem to other places, and of David to other men. In consequence of this remark, we shall see the necessity of correcting this passage by its parallel in 2 Chronicles 6:5, 6, where the thirteen Hebrew words now lost in Kings are happily preserved. Let us compare the passages:—

- K. Since to day that I brought forth my people
- C. Since the day that I brought forth my people
- K. Israel out of Egypt, I chose no CITY
- C. out of the land of Egypt, I chose no CITY
- K. out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house,
- C. among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in,
- K. that my name might be therein;
- C. that my name might be there; neither chose I
- C. any MAN to be a ruler over my people Israel:
- C. but I have chosen JERUSALEM, that my name
- K. but I chose David to be

C. might be there; and have chosen DAVID to be  
 K. over my people Israel.  
 C. over my people Israel.

I would just observe here, that I do not think these thirteen words ever made a part of Kings, and consequently, are not lost from it; nor do they exist here in any of the versions; but their being found in Chronicles helps to complete the sense.

**Verse 21. *Wherein is the covenant of the Lord*** As it is said, 1 Kings 8:9, that there was nothing in the ark but the two tables of stone, consequently these are called the Covenant, i.e., a sign of the covenant; as our Lord calls the cup the new covenant in his blood, that is, the sign of the new covenant: for This is my body implies, This is the sign or emblem of my body.

**Verse 22. *Stood*** He ascended the brazen scaffold, five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and then kneeled down upon his knees, with his hands spread up to heaven, and offered up the following prayer: see 1 Kings 8:54, and 2 Chronicles 5:12, 13.

***And spread forth his hands toward heaven*** This was a usual custom in all nations: in prayer the hands were stretched out to heaven, as if to invite and receive assistance from thence; while, humbly kneeling on their knees, they seemed acknowledge at once their dependence and unworthiness. On this subject I have spoken elsewhere. In the Scriptures we meet with several examples of the kind: Hear my voice-when I LIFT UP MY HANDS toward thy holy oracle; Psalm 28:2. LIFT UP YOUR HANDS in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord; Psalm 134:2. Let my prayer be set forth-and the LIFTING UP OF MY HANDS as the evening sacrifice; Psalm 141:2. And see 1 Timothy 2:8, etc.

In heathen writers examples are not less frequent:

*SUSTULIT exutas vinclis ad sidera PALMAS.  
 Vos aeterni ignes, et non violabile vestrum Testor numen, ait.*

*VIRG. AEn. lib. ii., ver. 153.*

*Ye lamps of heaven, he said, and LIFTED HIGH HIS HANDS,  
 now free; thou venerable sky, Inviolable powers!*



And that they kneeled down when supplicating I have also proved. Of this too the Scriptures afford abundant evidence, as do also the heathen writers. I need add but one word:—

*Et GENBIUS PRONIS supplex, similisque roganti,  
Circumfert tacitos, tanquam sun brachia, vultus.*

*OVID, Met. lib. iii., f. 3, ver. 240.*

Indeed, so universal were these forms in praying, that one of the heathens has said, “All men, in praying, lift up their hands to heaven.”

**Verse 24. *Who has kept with thy servant David*** This is in reference to 2 Samuel 7:13, where God promises to David that Solomon shall build a house for the name of the Lord. The temple being now completed, this promise was literally fulfilled.

**Verse 27. *But will God indeed dwell on the earth?*** This expression is full of astonishment, veneration, and delight. He is struck with the immensity, dignity, and grandeur of the Divine Being, but especially at his condescension to dwell with men: and though he sees, by his filling the place, that he has come now to make his abode with them, yet he cannot help asking the question, How can such a God dwell in such a place, and with such creatures?

***Behold, the heaven*** The words are all in the plural number in the Hebrew: **הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם הַשָּׁמַיִם** hashshamayim, ushemey hashshamayim; “the heavens, and the heavens of heavens.” What do these words imply? That there are systems, and systems of systems, each possessing its sun, its primary and secondary planets, all extending beyond each other in unlimited space, in the same regular and graduated order which we find to prevail in what we call our solar system; which probably, in its thousands of millions of miles in diameter, is, to some others, no more than the area of the lunar orbit to that of the Georgium Sidus. When God, his manifold wisdom, his creative energy, and that space which is unlimited, are considered, it is no hyperbole to say that, although the earth has been created nearly six thousand years ago, suns, the centres of systems, may have been created at so immense a distance that their light has not yet reached our earth, though travelling at the rate of one hundred and ninety thousand miles every second, or upwards of a million times swifter than

the motion of a cannon ball! This may be said to be inconceivable; but what is even all this to the vast immensity of space! Had God created a system like ours in every six days since the foundation of the world, and kept every seventh as a Sabbath; and though there might have been by this time [A.M. 5823 ineunte, A.D. 1819, ineunte] three hundred and three thousand five hundred and seventy-five mundane systems, they would occupy but a speck in the inconceivable immensity of space. Reader, all this and millions more is demonstrably possible; and if so, what must God be—illud inexprimibile—who i-n-h-a-b-i-t-e-t-h E-t-e-r-n-i-t-y!

**Verse 29. *My name shall be there*** I will there show forth my power and my glory by enlightening, quickening, pardoning, sanctifying, and saving all my sincere worshippers.

**Verse 30. *Toward this place*** Both tabernacle and temple were types of our Lord Jesus, or of God manifested in the flesh; and he was and is the Mediator between God and man. All prayer, to be acceptable, and to be entitled to a hearing, must go to God through Him. The human nature of Christ is the temple in which dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; therefore with propriety all prayer must be offered to God through Him. “If they pray toward this place, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest, forgive.” This appears to me to be the true sense and doctrine of this verse.

**Verse 31. *If any man trespass against his neighbor*** Solomon puts here seven cases, in all of which the mercy and intervention of God would be indispensably requisite; and he earnestly bespeaks that mercy and intervention on condition that the people pray towards that holy place, and with a feeling heart make earnest supplication.

The FIRST case is one of doubtfulness; where a man has sustained an injury, and charges it on a suspected person, though not able to bring direct evidence of the fact, the accused is permitted to come before the altar of God, and purge himself by his personal oath. Solomon prays that God may not permit a false oath to be taken, but that he will discover the truth, so that the wicked shall be condemned, and the righteous justified.

**Verse 33. *When thy people Israel be smitten down, etc.*** The SECOND case. When their enemies make inroads upon them, and defeat them in

battle, and lead them into captivity, because God, being displeased with their transgressions, has delivered them up; then if they shall turn again, confess the name of God, which they had in effect denied, by either neglecting his worship, or becoming idolatrous; and pray and make supplication; then, says Solomon, hear thou in heaven-and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

**Verse 35. *When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain*** The THIRD case. When, because of their sin, and their ceasing to walk in the good way in which they should have walked, God refuses to send the early and latter rain, so that the appointed weeks of harvest come in vain, as there is no crop: then, if they pray and confess their sin, hear thou in heaven, etc.

**Verse 37. *If there be in the land famine-pestilence*** The FOURTH case includes several kinds of evils: 1. Famine; a scarcity or total want of bread, necessarily springing from the preceding cause, drought. 2. Pestilence; any general and contagious disease. 3. Blasting; any thing by which the crops are injured, so that the ear is never matured; but instead of wholesome grain, there is a black offensive dust. 4. Mildew; any thing that vitiates or corrodes the texture of the stalk, destroys the flowers and blossoms, or causes the young shaped fruits to fall off their stems. 5. Locust, a well known curse in the East, a species of grasshopper that multiplies by millions, and covers the face of the earth for many miles square, destroying every green thing; leaving neither herb nor grass upon the earth, nor leaf nor bark upon the trees. 6. Caterpillar; the locust in its young or nymph state. The former refers to locusts brought by winds from other countries and settling on the land; the latter, to the young locusts bred in the land. 7. An enemy, having attacked their defenced cities, the keys and barriers of the land. 8. Any other kind of plague; that which affects the surface of the body; blotch, blain, leprosy, ophthalmia, etc. 9. Sickness; whatever impaired the strength, or affected the intestines, disturbing or destroying their natural functions. All such cases were to be brought before the Lord, the persons having a deep sense of the wickedness which induced God thus to afflict, or permit them to be afflicted: for only those who knew the plague of their own hearts, (1 Kings 8:38,) the deep-rooted moral corruption of their nature, and the destructive nature and sinfulness of sin, were likely to pray in such a manner as to induce God to hear and forgive.

**Verse 41. *Moreover, concerning a stranger*** The FIFTH case relates to heathens coming from other countries with the design to become proselytes to the true religion; that they might be received, blessed, and protected as the true Israelites, that the name of Jehovah might be known over the face of the earth.

**Verse 44. *If thy people go out to battle*** The SIXTH case refers to wars undertaken by Divine appointment: whithersoever thou shalt send them; for in no other wars could they expect the blessing and concurrence of the Lord; in none other could the God of truth and justice maintain their cause. There were such wars under the Mosaic dispensation, there are none such under the Christian dispensation: nor can there be any; for the Son of man is come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Except mere defensive war, all others are diabolic; and, query, if there were no provocations, would there be any attacks, and consequently any need of defensive wars?

**Verse 46. *If they sin against thee*** This SEVENTH case must refer to some general defection from truth, to some species of false worship, idolatry, or corruption of the truth and ordinances of the Most High; as for it they are here stated to be delivered into the hands of their enemies and carried away captive, which was the general punishment for idolatry, and what is called, 1 Kings 8:47, acting perversely and committing wickedness.

In 1 Kings 8:46 we read, If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not. On this verse we may observe that the second clause, as it is here translated, renders the supposition in the first clause entirely nugatory; for if there be no man that sinneth not, it is useless to say, If they sin; but this contradiction is taken away by reference to the original, **כִּי יַחַטּוּ לָךְ** ki yechetu lach, which should be translated IF they shall sin against thee, or should they sin against thee; **כִּי אֵין אָדָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַחַטּוּ** ki ein Adam asher lo yecheta, for there is no man that MAY not sin; i.e., there is no man impeccable, none infallible, none that is not liable to transgress. This is the true meaning of the phrase in various parts of the Bible, and so our translators have understood the original: for even in the thirty-first verse of this chapter they have translated **יַחַטּוּ** yecheta, IF a man TRESPASS; which certainly implies he might or might not do it; and in this way they have translated the same word, IF a soul SIN, in Leviticus

5:1; 6:2; 1 Samuel 2:25; 2 Chronicles 6:22, and in several other places. The truth is, the Hebrew has no mood to express words in the permissive or optative way, but to express this sense it uses the future tense of the conjugation kal.

This text has been a wonderful strong hold for all who believe that there is no redemption from sin in this life, that no man can live without committing sin, and that we cannot be entirely freed from it till we die. 1. The text speaks no such doctrine: it only speaks of the possibility of every man sinning, and this must be true of a state of probation. 2. There is not another text in the Divine records that is more to the purpose than this. 3. The doctrine is flatly in opposition to the design of the Gospel; for Jesus came to save his people from their sins, and to destroy the works of the devil. 4. It is a dangerous and destructive doctrine; and should be blotted out of every Christian's creed. There are too many who are seeking to excuse their crimes by all means in their power; and we need not embody their excuses in a creed, to complete their deception, by stating that their sins are unavoidable.

**Verse 50. *And give them compassion before them who carried them captive*** He does not pray that they may be delivered out of that captivity, but that their enemies may use them well; and that they may, as formerly, be kept a separate and distinct people.

**Verse 55. *He stood, and blessed all the congregation*** This blessing is contained in 1 Kings 8:57, 58.

**Verse 59. *And let these my words*** This and the following verse is a sort of supplement to the prayer which ended 1 Kings 8:53; but there is an important addition to this prayer in the parallel place, 2 Chronicles 6:41, 42: "Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant."

**Verse 61. *Let your heart therefore be perfect*** Be sincere in your faith, be irreproachable in your conduct.

**Verse 63. *Two and twenty thousand oxen*** This was the whole amount of the victims that had been offered during the fourteen days; i.e., the seven days of the dedication, and the seven days of the feast of tabernacles. In what way could they dispose of the blood of so many victims?

**Verse 64. *Did the king hallow the middle of the court*** The great altar of burnt-offerings was not sufficient for the number of sacrifices which were then made; therefore the middle of the court was set apart, and an altar erected there for the same purpose.

**Verse 65. *From-Hamath*** Supposed to be Antioch of Syria; unto the river of Egypt-to the Rhinocorura; the former being on the north, the latter on the south: i.e., from one extremity of the land to the other.

**Verse 66. *They blessed the king*** Wished him all spiritual and temporal happiness. They were contented with their king, at peace among themselves, and happy in their God; so that they returned to their houses magnifying their God for all his bounty to them, their country, and their king. How happy must these people have been, and how prosperous, had their king continued to walk uprightly before God! But alas! the king fell, and the nation followed his example.

## CHAPTER 9

*The Lord appears a second time to Solomon, and assures him that he had heard his prayer; and that he would establish his worship for ever in that temple, and him and his successors on the throne of Israel, provided he and they would keep his statutes and judgments, 1-5; but if they should transgress and forsake the Lord, then they should be cast off, the temple itself abandoned, and their enemies permitted to prevail over them, 6-9. Solomon having finished the temple and the king's house, about which he was employed twenty years, and having received assistance from Hiram king of Tyre, he gave him in return twenty cities in Galilee, with which he was not pleased, 10-14. Solomon's levies, buildings, and the persons employed, 15-23. Pharaoh's daughter comes to the city of David, 24. He sacrifices thrice a year at the temple, 25. Solomon's navy, and the gold they brought from Ophir, 26-28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 2. *The Lord appeared to Solomon*** The design of this appearance, which was in a dream, as that was at Gibeon, was to assure Solomon that God had accepted his service, and had taken that house for his dwelling-place, and would continue it, and establish him and his descendants upon the throne of Israel for ever, provided they served him with an upright heart; but, on the contrary, if they forsook him, he would abandon both them and his temple.

**Verse 7. *A proverb and a by-word among all people*** And so they are to the present; the unbelieving Jews, the stubborn, stiff-necked Jews, are words still in common use. They forsook the Lord, rejected his Christ, and are cast off, their temple destroyed, and they scattered over the face of the earth.

**Verse 9. *Have taken hold upon other gods*** When an indigent person claims the protection of a superior, he casts himself down before him, and lays hold of his feet; and this expression is frequently used when there is no prostration: I have taken hold of thy feet. When a person is called into

the presence of the Burman monarch, he is said to go to the golden foot. —  
WARD'S Customs.

**Verse 10. *At the end of twenty years*** He employed seven years and a half in building the temple, and twelve years and a half in building the king's house; see 1 Kings 7:1; 2 Chronicles 8:1.

**Verse 11. *Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities*** It is very likely that Solomon did not give those cities to Hiram so that they should be annexed to his Tyrian dominions, but rather gave him the produce of them till the money was paid which he had advanced to Solomon for his buildings. It appears however that either Hiram did not accept them, or that having received the produce till he was paid, he then restored them to Solomon; for in the parallel place, 2 Chronicles 8:2, it is said, The cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there. Some think that they were heathen cities which Solomon had conquered, and therefore had a right to give them if he pleased, as they were not any part of the land given by promise to the Israelites.

**Verse 13. *Called them the land of Cabul*** Whether this epithet was given to this land by Hiram as a mark of disapprobation, or what is its proper meaning, the learned are not agreed. That there was a country of this name in the promised land in the time of Joshua, is evident enough from Joshua 19:27, as it was one part of the boundary of the tribe of Asher; hence some interpret the word border or boundary, and so, the Septuagint understood it, for they have translated the Hebrew word *opiov*, which signifies the same. The margin gives another meaning.

**Verse 14. *Sixscore talents of gold.*** This was the sum which Hiram had lent, and in order to pay this Solomon had laid a tax upon his people, as we afterward learn. The whole is very darkly expressed.

**Verse 15. *This is the reason of the levy*** That is, in order to pay Hiram the sixscore talents of gold which he had borrowed from him (Hiram not being willing to take the Galilean cities mentioned above; or, having taken them, soon restored them again) he was obliged to lay a tax upon the people; and that this was a grievous and oppressive tax we learn from 1 Kings 12:1-4,



where the elders of Israel came to Rehoboam, complaining of their heavy state of taxation, and entreating that their yoke might be made lighter.

**And Millo** This is supposed to have been a deep valley between Mount Sion and what was called the city of Jebus, which Solomon filled up, and it was built on, and became a sort of fortified place, and a place for public assemblies. — See Calmet.

**Verse 16. Pharaoh-had gone up, and taken Gezer** This city Joshua had taken from the Canaanites, Joshua 10:33; 12:12, and it was divided by lot to the tribe of Ephraim, and was intended to be one of the Levitical cities; but it appears that the Canaanites had retaken it, and kept possession till the days of Solomon, when his father-in-law, Pharaoh king of Egypt, retook it, and gave it to Solomon in dowry with his daughter.

**Verse 18. And Tadmor in the wilderness** This is almost universally allowed to be the same with the celebrated Palmyra, the ruins of which remain to the present day, and give us the highest idea of Solomon's splendor and magnificence. Palmyra stood upon a fertile plain surrounded by a barren desert, having the river Euphrates on the east. The ruins are well described by Messrs. Dawkes and Wood, of which they give fine representations. They are also well described in the ancient part of the Universal History, vol. i., p. 367-70. The description concludes thus: "The world never saw a more glorious city; the pride, it is likely, of ancient times, and the reproach of our own; a city not more remarkable for the state of her buildings and unwontedness of her situation than for the extraordinary personages who once flourished there, among whom the renowned Zenobia and the incomparable Longinus must for ever be remembered with admiration and regret."

**Verse 19. And all the cities of store** Though, by the multitude and splendor of his buildings, Solomon must have added greatly to the magnificence of his reign; yet, however plenteous silver and gold were in his times, his subjects must have been greatly oppressed with the taxation necessary to defray such a vast public expenditure.

**Verse 21. A tribute of bond-service** He made them do the most laborious part of the public works, the Israelites being generally exempt. When Sesostris, king of Egypt, returned from his wars, he caused temples to be

built in all the cities of Egypt, but did not employ one Egyptian in the work, having built the whole by the hands of the captives which he had taken in his wars. Hence he caused this inscription to be placed upon each temple:—

ουδεις εγγωριος εις αυτα μεμοχθηκε.

*No native has labored in these*  
*Diodor. Sic. Bibl., lib. i., c. 56.*

It appears that Solomon might with propriety have placed a similar inscription on most of his works.

**Verse 25. *Three times in a year did Solomon offer*** These three times were: 1. The passover. 2. The feast of pentecost. 3. The feast of tabernacles.

**Verse 26. *A navy of ships*** Literally, **וני** oni, a ship: in the parallel place, 2 Chronicles 8:17, it is said that Hiram sent him **וניות** oniyoth, ships; but it does not appear that Solomon in this case built more than one ship, and this was manned principally by the Tyrians.

**Verse 28. *And they came to Ophir*** No man knows certainly, to this day, where this Ophir was situated. There were two places of this name; one somewhere in India, beyond the Ganges, and another in Arabia, near the country of the Sabaeans, mentioned by Job, Job 22:24: Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust; and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. And Job 28:16: It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. Calmet places this country at the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris.

But there are several reasons to prove that this was not the Ophir of the Bible, which it seems was so situated as to require a voyage of three years long to go out, load, and return. Mr. Bruce has discussed this subject at great length; see his Travels, vol. ii., chap. iv., p. 354, etc. He endeavors to prove that Ezion-geber is situated on the Elanitic branch of the Arabian Gulf or Red Sea. 2. That Tharshish is Moka, near to Melinda, in the Indian Ocean, in about three degrees south latitude. 3. That Ophir lies somewhere in the land of Sofala, or in the vicinity of the Zimbeze river, opposite the island of Madagascar, where there have been gold and silver mines in great

abundance from the remotest antiquity. And he proves, 4. That no vessel could perform this voyage in less than THREE years, because of the monsoons; that more time need not be employed, and that this is the precise time mentioned in 1 Kings 10:22. 5. That this is the country of the queen of Sheba, or Sabia, or Azeba, who on her visit to Solomon, brought him one hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices and precious stones great store, 1 Kings 10:10. And that gold, ivory, silver, etc., are the natural productions of this country. To illustrate and prove his positions he has given a map on a large scale, “showing the track of Solomon’s fleet in their three years’ voyage from the Elanitic Gulf to Ophir and Tharshish;” to which, and his description, I must refer the reader.

## CHAPTER 10

*The queen of Sheba visits Solomon, and brings rich presents; and tries him by hard questions, which he readily solves, 1-3. She expresses great surprise at his wisdom, his buildings, his court, etc.; and praises God for placing him on the Jewish throne, 4-9. She gives him rich presents, 10. What the navy of Hiram brought from Ophir, 11, 12. The queen of Sheba returns, 13. Solomon's annual revenue, 14, 15. He makes two hundred targets and three hundred shields of gold, 16, 17. His magnificent ivory throne, 18-20. His drinking vessels all of gold, 21. What the navy of Tharshish brought every three years to Solomon, 22. His great riches, numerous chariots, and horsemen, 23-27. He brings chariots and horses out of Egypt, 28, 29.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1. *When the queen of Sheba heard*** As our Lord calls her queen of the south, (Matthew 12:42), it is likely the name should be written Saba, Azab, or Azaba, all of which signify the south. She is called Balkis by the Arabians, but by the Abyssinians Maqueda. See the account at the end of this chapter. {1 Kings 10:29}

***With hard questions.*** בְּחִידוֹת bechidoth; Septuagint, ἐν αἰνιγμασιν, riddles. With parables and riddles, says the Arabic.

**Verse 2. *She came to Jerusalem with-spices, etc.*** Those who contend that she was queen of the Sabaeans, a people of Arabia Felix, towards the southern extremity of the Red Sea, find several proofs of their opinion: 1. That the Sabaeans abounded in riches and spices.

*India mittit ebur, molles sua thura Sabaei*

*“India furnishes ivory, and the effeminate Sabaeans their frankincense.”*

VIRG. *Geor. i., ver. 57.*

And again:—

*Divisae arboribus patriae: sola India nigrum  
Fert ebum; solis est thurea virga Sabaeis.*

*Geor. ii., ver. 116.*

*All sorts of trees their several countries know:  
Black ebon only will in India grow;  
And odorous frankincense on the Sabaeon bough.*

*DRYDEN.*

— *Ubi templum illi centumque Sabaeo Thure calent arae.*

*Where to her fame a hundred altars rise,  
And pour Sabaeon odours to the skies.*

PLINY (Hist. Nat. lib. xii., c. 17) observes, Non alia ligni genera in usu sunt quam odorata; cibosque Sabaei coquunt thuris ligno; alii myrrhae. “The Sabaeans use odorous wood only, and even use the incense tree and myrrh to cook their victuals.”

2. All ancient authors speak, not only of their odoriferous woods, but of their rich gold and silver mines, and of their precious stones. See Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvii., c. 6, etc.

3. It is also well known that the Sabaeans had queens for their sovereigns, and not kings. So Claudian, in Eutrop. lib. i.

— *Medis levibusque Sabaeis Imperat hic sexus,  
reginarumque sub armis Barbariae pars magna jacet.*

By this is meant, says Mr. Bruce, the country between the tropic and mountains of Abyssinia, the country of shepherds, from berber, a shepherd. And he contends that these Sabaeans were a distinct people from the Ethiopians and the Arabs, and that SABA was a distinct state.

**Verse 3. Solomon told her all her questions** Riddles, problems, fables, apologues, etc., formed the principal part of the wisdom of the East; indeed they use and delight in them to the present day. See the case of Samson and his friends, Judges 14:12, 14, and the notes there.

**Verse 4. *Had seen all Solomon's wisdom*** By the answers which he gave to her subtle questions.

***And the house that he had built*** Most probably his own house.

**Verse 5. *The meat of his table*** The immense supply of all kinds of food daily necessary for the many thousands which were fed at and from his table. See 1 Kings 4:22, 23, and the notes there.

***And the sitting of his servants*** The various orders and distinctions of his officers.

***The attendance of his ministers*** See the account of these and their attendance, 1 Kings 4:1, etc.

***And their apparel*** The peculiarity of their robes, and their splendor and costliness.

***And his cup-bearers*** The original **משקיו** mashkaiv may as well be applied to his beverage, or to his drinking utensils, as to his cup-bearers.

***And his ascent by which he went up*** It seems very strange that the steps to the temple should be such a separate matter of astonishment. The original is **ועלתו אשר יעלה בית יהוה** which all the versions have translated, And the holocausts which he offered in the house of the Lord. The Vulgate, Septuagint, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, all express this sense: so does the German translation of Luther, from which, in this place, we have most pitifully departed: And seine Brandopfer, die er in dem Hause des Herrn opferte; "And his burnt-offering which he offered in the house of the Lord."

***There was no more spirit in her.*** She was overpowered with astonishment; she fainted. I have seen precisely the same effect produced; a lady who was herself an artist, viewing some exquisitely finished oriental paintings, was so struck with astonishment that she twice nearly fainted, and was obliged to leave the room. What happened to the queen of Sheba is a natural and not an uncommon effect which will be produced in a delicate sensible mind at the sight of rare and extraordinary productions of art.

Of the profusion of Solomon's sacrifices we have already had proof, 1 Kings 8:63; 9:25.

**Verse 8. *Happy are thy men*** All these are very natural expressions from a person in her state of mind.

**Verse 10. *A hundred and twenty talents of gold*** The worth of these one hundred and twenty talents of gold, according to Mr. Reynolds, is equal to ú843, 905. 10s. 4 3/4d. of our British sterling. But the spices and precious stones might have been yet of more value. After this verse the 13th should be read, which is here most evidently misplaced; and then the account of the queen of Sheba will be concluded, and that of Solomon's revenue will stand without interruption.

**Verse 11. *Great plenty of almug trees*** In the parallel place, 2 Chronicles 9:10, 11, these are called algum trees, the □ mem and the ך gimel being transposed; probably the latter is the more correct orthography. What the algum trees were we do not exactly know. The Vulgate calls it ligna thyina, the thya or lignum vitae wood; and Mr. Parkhurst thinks that the original אלגומים algumim, comes from אל al, not, and ג gem, to fill; because the lignum vitae is of so close a texture that it can imbibe no water, and cannot be affected by wet weather. The Septuagint translate it ξυλα πυκινα, pine timber; the Syriac (Syriac) kaise dakisotho, probably cypress wood, or what the translators render ligna brasilica; the Arabic translates coloured wood, and subjoins a paraphrase, for that wood was by nature painted with various colors. Perhaps the Arabic comes nearest the truth; wood shaded of different colors, such as the rose wood and such like, which are brought to us from various parts of the East Indies. The whole passage as it stands in the Arabic is this: "And the ships of Hiram brought gold from the land of Hind, (India,) and they carried also much coloured wood, (but this wood is naturally painted of various colors,) and very precious jewels. And Solomon put some of that same painted wood which was brought to him in the house of the Lord, and in his own house; and with it he adorned them." And for inlaying and veneering nothing can be finer than this wood.

**Verse 13. *All her desire whatsoever she asked*** Some imagine she desired progeny from the wise king of Israel; and all the traditions concerning her state that she had a son by Solomon called Menilek, who was brought up

at the Israelitish court, succeeded his mother in the kingdom of Saba, and introduced among his subjects the Jewish religion. See at the end of the chapter. {1 Kings 10:29}

**Verse 14. *The weight of gold-was six hundred threescore and six talents***

This would amount in our money to ú4, 683, 675 12s. 8 1/2d. sterling. This seems to be what he got annually of bullion; but independently of this, he had tribute of all the kings of Arabia, duties from merchantmen, and the traffic of spice merchants; see 1 Kings 10:25.

**Verse 16. *Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold*** I have already conjectured that the צַנְנָה tsinnah might resemble the Highland targe or target, with a dagger projecting from the UMBO or center.

**Verse 17. *He made three hundred shields*** The מגן magen was a large shield by which the whole body was protected.

Mr. Reynolds computes that the two hundred targets, on each of which were employed three hundred shekels of gold, were worth ú28, 131 16s. 9 1/2d.

And the three hundred shields, in forming each of which three pounds of gold were employed, were worth ú210, 976 7s. 7d.

**Verse 19. *The throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side*** This description seems to indicate that the throne was in the form of one of our ancient round-topped, two-armed chairs. This throne or chair of state was raised on a platform, the ascent to which consisted of six steps. What we call stays is in the Hebrew יָדוֹת yadoth, hands, which serves to confirm the conjecture above.

**Verse 22. *A navy of Tharshish*** For probable conjectures concerning this place, and the three years' voyage, see at the end of this and the preceding chapter. {1 Kings 10:29; 9:28}

**Apes** קֹפִים kophim; probably a species of monkey rather than ape.

**Verse 23. *Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches*** Mr. Reynolds, stating the yearly tribute of Solomon, 666 talents of gold, at about four times as much as his father left him, hence reckons that he had



ú4, 909, 371 8s. 8d. each year, ú94, 410 19s. 9 1/4d. per week, ú13, 487 5s. 8d. per day, taking each day, week, and year, one with another.

**Verse 25. *They brought every man his present*** This means tribute; and it shows us of what sort that tribute was, viz., vessels of gold and silver, probably ingots; garments of very rich stuffs; armor, for little of this kind was ever made in Judea; spices, which doubtless sold well in that country; horses, which were very rare; and mules, the most necessary animal for all the purposes of life.

**Verse 26. *He had a thousand and four hundred chariots*** See the note on 1 Kings 4:26.

**Verse 27. *Made silver-as stones*** He destroyed its value by making it so exceedingly plenty.

***As the sycamore trees*** He planted many cedars, and doubtless had much cedar wood imported; so that it became as common as the sycamore trees, which appear to have grown there in great abundance. This is considered to be a tree that partakes of the nature of the fig tree, and of the mulberry. Of the former it has the fruit, and of the latter the leaves; that is, the fruit had a considerable resemblance to the fig, and the leaf to that of the mulberry tree: hence its name sycamore, from the Greek **συκον**, a fig, and **μορεα**, a mulberry tree.

**Verse 28. *Horses brought out of Egypt*** It is thought that the first people who used horses in war were the Egyptians; and it is well known that the nations who knew the use of this creature in battle had greatly the advantage of those who did not. God had absolutely prohibited horses to be imported or used; but in many things Solomon paid little attention to the Divine command.

***And linen yarn*** The original word, **מִקְוֵה** mikveh, is hard to be understood, if it be not indeed a corruption.

The versions are all puzzled with it: the Vulgate and Septuagint make it a proper name: “And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and from Coa, or Tekoa.” Some think it signifies a tribute, thus Bochart: “They brought horses to Solomon out of Egypt; and as to the tribute, the farmers of this prince received it at a price.” They farmed the tribute, gave so much

annually for it, taking the different kinds to themselves, and giving a round sum for the whole.

Some suppose that MIKVEH signifies the string or cord by which one horse's head is tied to the tail of another; and that the meaning is, Solomon brought droves of horses, thus tied, out of Egypt.

Rabbi Solomon Jarchi, in his comment on the parallel place, 2 Chronicles 1:14, says that **מִקְוֵה** mikveh signifies a collection or drove of horses, or what the Germans call stutte, a stud. He observes on that place, "That he has heard that there was a company of merchants in Egypt, who bought horses from the Egyptians at a certain price, on condition that no person should be permitted to bring a horse out of Egypt but through them."

Houbigant supposes the place to be corrupt, and that for **מִקְוֵה** mikveh we should read **מֶרְכָבָה** mercabah, chariots: "And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and chariots; and the king's merchants received the chariots at a price: and a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver," etc. This makes a very good and consistent sense; but none of the versions acknowledged it, nor is there any various reading here in any of the MSS. yet collated.

If we understand it of thread, it may refer to the byssus or fine flax for which Egypt was famous; but I do not see on what authority we translate it linen thread. Bochart's opinion appears to me the most probable, as the text now stands; but the charge contended for by Houbigant makes the text far more simple and intelligible.

**Verse 29. A chariot came up-for six hundred shekels** This was the ordinary price of a chariot, as a hundred and fifty shekels were for a horse.

**Kings of the Hittites** These must have been the remains of the original inhabitants of Canaan, who had gone to some other country, probably Syria, and formed themselves into a principality there. It seems that neither horses nor chariots came out of Egypt but by means of Solomon's servants.

## MR. BRUCE'S ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON'S VOYAGE TO OPHIR

“WE are not to wonder, if the prodigious hurry and flow of business, and the immensely valuable transactions they had with each other, had greatly familiarized the Tyrians and Jews with their correspondents, the Cushites and shepherds, on the coast of Africa. This had gone so far as, very naturally, to create a desire in the queen of Azab, the sovereign of that country, to go herself and see the application of the immense treasures that had been exported from her country for a series of years, and the prince who so magnificently employed them. There can be no doubt of this expedition; as Pagan, Arab, Moor, Abyssinian, and all the countries around, vouch for it nearly in the terms of Scripture.

“Her name, the Arabs say, was Belkis; the Abyssinians, Maqueda. Our Savior calls her queen of the south, without mentioning any other name, but gives his sanction to the truth of the voyage. ‘The queen of the south (or Saba, or Azab) shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here.’ No other particulars, however, are mentioned about her in Scripture; and it is not probable that our Savior would have said she came from the uttermost parts of the earth, if she had been an Arab, and had near fifty degrees of the continent behind her. But when we consider that the boundaries of the known land, to the southward, were at that time Raptum or Prassum, as we have just seen, these, being the uttermost parts of the known earth, were, with great propriety, so styled by our Savior; and of these she was undoubtedly sovereign. The gold, the myrrh, cassia, and frankincense were all the produce of her own country.

“Whether she was a Jewess or a pagan is uncertain. Sabaism was the religion of all the East; it was the constant attendant and stumbling block of the Jews: but considering the multitude of that people then trading from Jerusalem, and the long time it continued, it is not improbable she was a Jewess. ‘And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions,’ 1 Kings 10:1; 2 Chronicles 9:1. Our Savior moreover speaks of her with praise, pointing her out as an example to the Jews. And in her

thanksgiving before Solomon, she alludes to God's blessing on the seed of Israel for ever, which is by no means the language of a pagan, but of a person skilled in the ancient history of this nation.

"She likewise appears to have been a person of learning, and of that sort of learning which was then almost peculiar to Palestine, not to Ethiopia; for we know that one of the reasons of her coming was to examine whether Solomon was really the learned man he was said to be. She came to try him in allegories or parables, in which Nathan had instructed him.

"The annals of the Abyssinians, being very full upon this point, have taken a middle opinion, and by no means an improbable one. They say she was a pagan when she left Azab, but, being full of admiration at Solomon's works, she was converted to Judaism in Jerusalem, and bore him a son whom he called Menilek, and who was their first king.

"The Abyssinians, both Jews and Christians, believe the forty-fifth Psalm to be a prophecy of the queen's voyage to Jerusalem; that she was attended by a daughter of Hiram's from Tyre to Jerusalem; and that the last part of it contains a declaration of her having a son by Solomon, who was to be a king over a nation of the Gentiles.

"To Saba or Azab, then, she returned with her son Menilek; whom, after keeping him some years, she sent back to his father to be instructed. Solomon did not neglect his charge; and he was anointed and crowned king of Ethiopia in the temple of Jerusalem, and at his inauguration took the name of David. After this he returned to Azab, and brought with him a colony of Jews, among whom were many doctors of the law of Moses, particularly one of each tribe, to make judges of in his kingdom; from whom the present umbares, or supreme judges (three of whom always attended the king) are said and believed to be descended. With these came also Azarias, the son of Zadok the priest, and brought with him a Hebrew transcript of the law, which was delivered into his custody, as he bore the title of nebret, or high priest; and this charge, though the book itself was burnt with the church of Axum in the Moorish war of Adel, is still continued, as it is said, in the lineage of Azarias, who are nebrets, or keepers of the church of Axum, at this day. All Abyssinia was thereupon converted, and the government of the church and state modelled according to what was then in use at Jerusalem.

“By the last act of the queen of Saba’s reign, she settled the mode of succession in her country for the future. First, she enacted, that the crown should be hereditary in the family of Solomon for ever. Secondly, that, after her, no woman should be capable of wearing that crown, or being queen; but that it should descend to the heir male, however distant, in exclusion of all heirs female, however near; and that these two articles should be considered as the fundamental laws of the kingdom, never to be altered or abolished. And, lastly, that the heirs male of the royal house should always be sent prisoners to a high mountain, where they were to continue till their death, or till the succession should open to them.

“The queen of Saba having made these laws irrevocable by all her posterity, died after a long reign of forty years, in 986 before Christ, placing her son Menilek upon the throne, whose posterity, the annals of Abyssinia would teach us to believe, have ever since reigned. So far, indeed, we must bear witness to them that this is no new doctrine, but has been steadfastly and uniformly maintained from their earliest account of time; first, when Jews, then in later days, after they had embraced Christianity. We may farther add, that the testimony of all the neighboring nations is with them on this subject, whether friends or enemies. They only differ in the name of the queen, or in giving her two names.

“I shall therefore now give a list of their kings of the race of Solomon, descended from the queen of Saba, whose device is a lion passant, proper, upon a field gules; and their motto, Mo Anbasa am Nizilet Solomon am Negade Juda; which signifies ‘The lion of the race of Solomon and tribe of Judah hath overcome.’

List of the kings of Abyssinia, from Maqueda, Queen of Saba, to the Nativity

Reigned yrs.	Reigned Yrs.		
Menilek, or David I.	4	Katzina.	9
Hendedya, or Zagdur .	1	Wazeha	1
Awida	11	Hazer	2
Ausyi	3	Kalas	6
Sawe	31	Solaya	16
Gesaya	15	Falaya	26
Katar	15	Aglebu	3
Mouta	20	Asisena.	1
Bahas	9	Brus	29
Kawida	2	Mohesa	1
Kanaza	10	Bazen	16

Bruce's Travels, vol. ii., p. 395.

Mr. Bruce justly finds fault with this table as being defective; several kings must necessarily have been lost out of this list. It is probably a late invention, the genealogical tables having been lost or destroyed; and no wonder when we consider the numerous predatory wars in which the people of Abyssinia have been frequently engaged.

I need scarcely add that the very learned Samuel Bochart has endeavored to prove by arguments not to be despised, that the Scripture Ophir is the island Taprobanes or Serendib, now called Ceylon. With any other opinions on this subject I think it unnecessary to trouble the reader. That the voyage which Mr. Bruce describes would take up three years, I think he has satisfactorily proved; but on other points and resemblances many readers will doubtless hesitate, while some may suppose his theory is the most plausible of any yet offered to the public on this very obscure subject.

## CHAPTER 11

*Solomon's attachment to strange women, and consequent idolatry, 1, 2. Number of his wives and concubines, 3. In his old age they turn away his heart from God, 4. He builds temples to idols, burns incense and sacrifices to them, 5-8. The Lord is angry with him, and threatens to deprive him of the kingdom, but will leave one tribe for David's sake, 9-13. The Lord stirs up Hadad, the Edomite, to be his enemy; the history of this man, 14-22. He stirs another adversary against him, Rezon the son of Eliadah. He and Hadad plague Israel, 23-25. Jeroboam also becomes his enemy, and the reason why, 26-28. Ahijah the prophet meets Jeroboam, and promises, in the name of the Lord, that God will rend Israel from the family of Solomon, and give him ten tribes, 29-39. Solomon, hearing of this, seeks to put Jeroboam to death, who escapes to Egypt, where he continues till the death of Solomon, 40. Solomon dies, after having reigned over Israel forty years; and his son Rehoboam reigns in his stead, 41-43.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. *Many strange women*** That is, idolaters; together with the daughter of Pharaoh: she was also one of those strange women and an idolater. But many think she became a proselyte to the Jewish religion; of this there is no evidence.

**Verse 3. *He had seven hundred wives, princesses*** How he could get so many of the blood royal from the different surrounding nations, is astonishing; but probably the daughters of noblemen, generals, etc., may be included.

***And three hundred concubines*** These were wives of the second rank, who were taken according to the usages of those times; but their offspring could not inherit. Sarah was to Abraham what these seven hundred princesses were to Solomon; and the three hundred concubines stood in the same relation to the Israelitish king as Hagar and Keturah did to the patriarch.

Here then are one thousand wives to form this great bad man's harem! Was it possible that such a person could have any piety to God, who was absorbed by such a number of women? We scarcely allow a man to have the fear of God who has a second wife or mistress; in what state then must the man be who has one thousand of them? We may endeavor to excuse all this by saying, "It was a custom in the East to have a multitude of women, and that there were many of those whom Solomon probably never saw," etc., etc. But was there any of them whom he might not have seen? Was it for reasons of state, or merely court splendor, that he had so many? How then is it said that he loved many strange women?-that he clave to them in love? And did he not give them the utmost proofs of his attachment when he not only tolerated their iniquitous worship in the land, but built temples to their idols, and more, burnt incense to them himself? As we should not condemn what God justifies, so we should not justify what God condemns. He went after Ashtaroth, the impure Venus of the Sidonians; after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites; after Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites; and after the murderous Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. He seems to have gone as far in iniquity as it was possible.

**Verse 7. *The hill that is before Jerusalem*** This was the Mount of Olives.

**Verse 9. *The Lord was angry with Solomon*** Had not this man's delinquency been strongly marked by the Divine disapprobation, it would have had a fatal effect on the morals of mankind. Vice is vice, no matter who commits it. And God is as much displeased with sin in Solomon as he can be with it in the most profligate, uneducated wretch. And although God sees the same sin in precisely the same degree of moral turpitude as to the act itself, yet there may be circumstances which greatly aggravate the offense, and subject the offender to greater punishment. Solomon was wise; he knew better; his understanding showed him the vanity as well as the wickedness of idolatry. God had appeared unto him twice, and thus given him the most direct proof of his being and of his providence. The promises of God had been fulfilled to him in the most remarkable manner, and in such a way as to prove that they came by a Divine counsel, and not by any kind of casualty. All these were aggravations of Solomon's crimes, as to their demerit; for the same crime has, in every case, the same degree



of moral turpitude in the sight of God; but circumstances may so aggravate, as to require the offender to be more grievously punished; so the punishment may be legally increased where the crime is the same. Solomon deserved more punishment for his worship of Ashtaroth than any of the Sidonians did, though they performed precisely the same acts. The Sidonians had never known the true God; Solomon had been fully acquainted with him.

**Verse 11. *Forasmuch as this is done of thee*** Was not this another warning from the Lord? And might not Solomon have yet recovered himself? Was there not mercy in this message which he might have sought and found?

**Verse 13. *Will give one tribe-for David my servant's sake*** The line of the Messiah must be preserved. The prevailing lion must come out of the tribe of Judah: not only the tribe must be preserved, but the regal line and the regal right. All this must be done for the true David's sake: and this was undoubtedly what God had in view by thus miraculously preserving the tribe of Judah and the royal line, in the midst of so general a defection.

***And for Jerusalem's sake*** As David was a type of the Messiah, so was Jerusalem a type of the true Church: therefore the OLD Jerusalem must be preserved in the hands of the tribe of Judah, till the true David should establish the NEW Jerusalem in the same land, and in the same city. And what a series of providences did it require to do all these things!

**Verse 14. *The Lord stirred up an adversary*** A satan, שָׂטָן. When he sent to Hiram to assist him in building the temple of the Lord, he could say, There was no satan, see 1 Kings 5:4; and all his kingdom was in peace and security,-every than dwelt under his vine, and under his fig tree, 1 Kings 4:25: but now that he had turned away from God, three satans rise up against him at once, Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam.

**Verse 15. *Was gone up to bury the slain*** The slain Edomites; for Joab had in the course of six months exterminated all the males, except Hadad and his servants, who escaped to Egypt. Instead of bury the slain, the Targum has to take the spoils of the slain.

**Verse 17. *Hadad being yet a little child.*** נֶעַר קָטָן naar katan, a little boy; one who was apprehensive of his danger, and could, with his father's servants, make his escape: not an infant.

**Verse 18. *These arose out of Midian*** They at first retired to Midian, which lay to the southwest of the Dead Sea. Not supposing themselves in safety there, they went afterwards to Paran in the south of Idumea, and getting a number of persons to join them in Paran, they went straight to Egypt, where we find Hadad became a favourite with Pharaoh, who gave him his sister-in-law to wife; and incorporated him and his family with his own.

**Verse 22. *Let me go in any wise.*** It does not appear that he avowed his real intention to Pharaoh; for at this time there must have been peace between Israel and Egypt, Solomon having married the daughter of Pharaoh.

**Verse 23. *Rezon the son of Eliadah*** Thus God fulfilled his threatening by the prophet Nathan: If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; 2 Samuel 7:14.

**Verse 24. *And reigned in Damascus.*** Rezon was one of the captains of Hadadezer, whom David defeated. It seems that at this time Rezon escaped with his men; and, having lived, as is supposed, some time by plunder, he seized on Damascus, and reigned there till David took Damascus, when he subdued Syria, and drove out Rezon. But after Solomon's defection from God, Rezon, finding that God had departed from Israel, recovered Damascus; and joining with Hadad, harassed Solomon during the remaining part of his reign. But some think that Hadad and Rezon were the same person.

**Verse 26. *Jeroboam the son of Nebat*** From the context we learn that Jeroboam while a young man was employed by Solomon to superintend the improvements and buildings at Millo, and had so distinguished himself there by his industry and good conduct as to attract general notice, and to induce Solomon to set him over all the laborers employed in that work, belonging to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, called here the house of Joseph. At first it appears that Solomon employed none of the Israelites in any drudgery; but it is likely that, as he grew profane, he grew tyrannical

and oppressive: and at the works of Millo he changed his conduct; and there, in all probability, were the seeds of disaffection sown. And Jeroboam, being a clever and enterprising man, knew well how to avail himself of the general discontent.

**Verse 29. *When Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem*** On what errand he was going out of Jerusalem, we know not.

***Ahijah the Shilonite*** He was one of those who wrote the history of the reign of Solomon, as we find from 2 Chronicles 9:29, and it is supposed that it was by him God spake twice to Solomon; and particularly delivered the message which we find in this chapter, 1 Kings 11:11-13.

**Verse 31. *Take thee ten pieces*** The garment was the symbol of the kingdom of Israel; the twelve pieces the symbol of the twelve tribes; the ten pieces given to Jeroboam, of the ten tribes which should be given to him, and afterwards form the kingdom of Israel, ruling in Samaria, to distinguish it from the kingdom of Judah, ruling in Jerusalem.

**Verse 36. *That David my servant may have a light always*** That his posterity may never fail, and the regal line never become extinct. This, as we have already seen, was in reference to the Messiah. He was not only David's light, but he was a light to enlighten the Gentiles.

**Verse 37. *According to all that thy soul desireth*** It appears from this that Jeroboam had affected the kingdom, and was seeking for an opportunity to seize on the government. God now tells him, by his prophet, what he shall have, and what he shall not have, in order to prevent him from attempting to seize on the whole kingdom, to the prejudice of the spiritual seed of David.

**Verse 38. *And build thee a sure house*** He would have continued his posterity on the throne of Israel, had he not by his wickedness forfeited the promises of God, and thrown himself out of the protection of the Most High.

**Verse 39. *But not for ever.*** They shall be in affliction and distress till the Messiah come, who shall sit on the throne of David to order it and establish it in judgment and justice for ever. Jarchi says, on this verse,

“When the Messiah comes, the kingdom shall be restored to the house of David.”

**Verse 40. *Sought-to kill Jeroboam.*** He thought by this means to prevent the punishment due to his crimes.

***Unto Shishak king of Egypt*** This is the first time we meet with the proper name of an Egyptian king, Pharaoh being the common name for all the sovereigns of that country. Some suppose that this Shishak was the Sesostris so renowned for his wars and his conquests. But it is likely that this king lived long before Solomon’s time.

**Verse 41. *The book of the acts of Solomon?*** These acts were written by Nathan the prophet, Ahijah the Shilonite, and Iddo the seer; as we learn from 2 Chronicles 9:29. Probably from these were the Books of Kings and Chronicles composed; but the original documents are long since lost.

**Verse 42. *Solomon reigned-forty years.*** Josephus says fourscore years, which is sufficiently absurd. Calmet supposes him to have been eighteen years old when he came to the throne, and that he died A.M. 3029, aged fifty-eight years; and, when we consider the excess in which he lived, and the criminal passions which he must have indulged among his thousand wives, and their idolatrous and impure worship, this life was as long as could be reasonably expected.

**Verse 43. *Solomon slept with his fathers*** He died in almost the flower of his age, and, it appears unregretted. His government was no blessing to Israel; and laid, by its exactions and oppressions, the foundation of that schism which was so fatal to the unhappy people of Israel and Judah, and was the most powerful procuring cause of the miseries which have fallen upon the Jewish people from that time until now.

I. IT may now be necessary to give a more distinct outline of the character of this king.

1. In his infancy and youth he had the high honor of being peculiarly loved by the Lord; and he had a name given him by the express authority of God himself, which to himself and others must ever call to remembrance this peculiar favor of the Most High.

There is little doubt that he was a most amiable youth, and his whole conduct appeared to justify the high expectations that were formed of him.

2. He ascended the Israelitish throne at a time the most favorable for the cultivation of those arts so necessary to the comfort and improvement of life. Among all the surrounding nations Israel had not one open enemy; there was neither adversary, nor evil occurrent, 1 Kings 5:4. He had rest on every side, and from the universal and profound peace which he enjoyed, the very important name Jedidiah, “beloved of the Lord” which was given him by Divine authority was changed to that of Solomon, the Peaceable, 2 Samuel 12:24, 25, which at once indicated the state of the country, and the character of his own mild, pacific mind.

3. To the dying charge of his pious father relative to the building a temple for the Lord, he paid the most punctual attention. He was fond of architecture, as we may learn from the account that is given of his numerous buildings and improvements; and yet it does not appear that he at all excelled in architectural knowledge. Hiram, the amiable king of Tyre, and his excellent workmen, were the grand directors and executors of the whole. By his public buildings he doubtless rendered Jerusalem highly respectable; but his passion for such works was not on the whole an advantage to his subjects, as it obliged him to have recourse to a burdensome system of taxation, which at first oppressed and exasperated his people, and ultimately led to the fatal separation of Israel and Judah.

4. That he improved the trade and commerce of his country is sufficiently evident: by his public buildings vast multitudes were employed; and knowledge in the most beneficial arts must have been greatly increased, and the spirit of industry highly cultivated.

Commerce does not appear to have been much regarded, if even known, in Israel, previously to the days of Solomon. The most celebrated maritime power then in the world was that of the Tyrians. With great address and prudence he availed himself of their experience and commercial knowledge, sent his ships in company with theirs to make long and dangerous but lucrative voyages, and, by getting their sailors aboard of his own vessels, gained possession of their nautical skill, and also a knowledge of those safe ports in which they harboured, and of the rich countries with which they traded. His friendly alliance with the king of Tyre was a source of

advantage to Israel, and might have been much more so had it been prudently managed. But after the time of Solomon we find it scarcely mentioned, and therefore it does not appear that the Jews continued to follow a track which had been so successfully opened to them; their endless contentions, and the ruinous wars of the two kingdoms, paralyzed all their commercial exertions: till at length all the maritime skill which they had acquired from the expert and industrious Tyrians, dwindled down to the puny art of managing a few boats on the internal lakes of their own country. Had it not been for the destructive feuds that reigned between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, that country might have become one of the best and richest maritime powers of either Asia or Europe. Their situation was grand and commanding, but their execrable jealousies deprived them of its advantages, exposed them to the aggressions of their enemies, and finally brought them to ruin.

5. I have intimated that Solomon was truly pious in his youth; of this there can be no doubt; it was on this account that the Lord loved him, and his zeal in the cause of true religion, and high respect for the honor of God, are strong indications of such a frame of mind. Had we no other proof of this than his prayer for wisdom, and his prayer at the dedication of the temple, it would put the matter for ever beyond dispute, independently of the direct testimonies we have from God himself on the subject. He loved the worship and ordinances of God, and was a pattern to his subjects of the strictest attention to religious duties. He even exceeded the requisitions of the law in the multitude of his sacrifices, and was a careful observer of those annual festivals so necessary to preserve the memory of the principal facts of the Israelitish history, and those miraculous interventions of God in the behalf of that people.

6. There can be no doubt that Solomon possessed the knowledge of governing well; of the importance of this knowledge he was duly aware, and this was the wisdom that he so particularly sought from God. "I am," said he, "but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in; and thy servant is in the midst of a great people that cannot be counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, and that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing;" 1 Kings 3:8-10. This wisdom he did receive

from God; and he is here a pattern to all kings, who, as they are the vicegerents of the Lord, should earnestly seek that wisdom which is from above, that they may be able to know how to govern the people intrusted to their care; because, in every civil government, there are a multitude of things on which a king may be called to decide, concerning which neither the laws, nor the commonly received political maxims by which, in particular cases, the conduct of a governor is to be regulated, can give any specific direction.

7. But the wisdom of Solomon was not confined to the art of government, he appears to have possessed a universal knowledge. The sages of the East were particularly distinguished by their accurate knowledge of human nature, from which they derived innumerable maxims for the regulation of man in every part of his moral conduct, and in all the relations in which he could possibly be placed. Hence their vast profusion of maxims, proverbs, instructive fables, apologues, enigmas, etc.; great collections of which still remain locked up in the languages of Asia, particularly the Sanscrit, Arabic, and Persian; besides those which, by the industry of learned men, have been translated and published in the languages of Europe. Much of this kind appears in the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha, and in the very excellent collections of D'Herbelot, Visdelou, and Galand, in the *Bibliothèque Orientale*. That Solomon possessed this wisdom in a very high degree, the book of Proverbs bears ample testimony, leaving Ecclesiastes for the present out of the consideration.

8. As a poet, Solomon stands deservedly high, though of his one thousand and five poems not one, except the book of Canticles, remains. This ode alone, taken in a literary point of view, is sufficient to raise any man to a high degree of poetic fame. It is a most interesting drama, where what Racine terms the *genie createur*, the creative genius, every where appears; in which the imagery, which is always borrowed from nature, is impressive and sublime; the characters accurately distinguished and defined, the strongest passion, in its purest and most vigorous workings, elegantly portrayed; and in which allusions the most delicate, to transactions of the tenderest complexion, while sufficiently described to make them intelligible, are nevertheless hidden from the eye of the gross vulgar by a tissue as light as a gossamer covering. Such is the nature of this inimitable ode, which, had it not been perverted by weak but well designing men to

purposes to which it can never legitimately apply, would have ranked with the highest productions of the Epithalamian kind that ever came from the pen of man. But alas! for this exquisite poem, its true sense has been perverted; it has been forced to speak a language that was never intended, a language far from being honorable to the cause which it was brought to support, and subversive of the unity and simplicity of the ode itself. By a forced mode of interpretation it has been hackneyed to death, and allegorized to destruction. It is now little read, owing to the injudicious manner in which it has been interpreted.

It was scarcely to be expected that the son of such a father should not, independently of inspiration, have caught a portion of the pure poetic fire. Though the spirit of poetry, strictly speaking, is not transmissible by ordinary generation, yet most celebrated poets have had poetical parents; but in many cases the talent has degenerated into that of music, and the spirit of poetry in the sire has become a mere musical instrument in the hands of the son. This however was not the case with the son of David, for though vastly inferior to his father in this gift, he had nevertheless the spirit and powers of a first-rate poet.

9. His knowledge in natural history must have been very extensive; it is said, "He spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. He spake also of beasts, of fowls, of reptiles, and of fishes;" 1 Kings 4:33. All this knowledge has perished; his countrymen, the prophets excepted, were without taste, and took no pains to preserve what they did not relish. A man of such mental power and comprehension under the direction of Divine light must have spoken of things as they are. His doctrine therefore of generation and corruption, of nutrition, vegetation, production, aliments, tribes, classes, families, and habits, relative to the different subjects in botany, zoology, ornithology, entomology, and ichthyology, which are all evidently referred to here, must have been at once correct, instructive, and delightful. I have already lamented the labor it has cost our Rays, Tourneforts, Linnes, Buffons, Willoughbys, Swammerdams, and Bloschs, to regain those sciences which possibly were possessed in their highest degree by the Israelitish king, and which, alas! are all lost, except a few traces in the book of Ecclesiastes, if that work can be traced to so remote an age as that of Solomon.



10. As a moral philosopher the author of the book of Ecclesiastes occupies no mean rank. At present we may consider this work as a production of Solomon, though this is disputed, and the question shall be considered in its proper place. This book contains such a fund of wisdom, applied to the regulation of life, and all referred to the proper end, that it most deservedly occupies a high place in Biblical ethics, and deserves the closest attention of every reader.

11. The proofs of Solomon's vast wisdom, as brought into practical effect, lie in a very small compass, because his history in the Bible is short, his own writings in general lost, and the annals of his reign, as compiled by Nathan the prophet, Ahijah the Shilonite, and Iddo the seer, long since perished. The decision between the two harlots is almost the only instance.

Of his interesting interview with the queen of Sheba, and the discussions into which they entered, we have only the fact stated, without the least detail of particulars. Those who have read the *Concessus of Harari*, or the *Heetopadesa*, of Veeshnoo Sarma, will regret that the conversations of the wisest of men, with probably the most intelligent of women, should have been lost to the world, which may be reasonably concluded to have been as far superior to the excellent works above referred to, as they are beyond the maxims of Rochefoucault, and the sayings of Madame Maintenon.

12. The wisdom of the East has ever been celebrated; and if we may believe their own best writers, much of what they possess has been derived from Solomon. Encomiums of his wisdom are everywhere to be met with in the Asiatic writers; and his name is famous in every part of the East. Most of the oriental historians, poets, and philosophers, mention Soliman ben Daoud, "Solomon the son of David." They relate that he ascended the throne of Israel at the death of his father, when he was only twelve years of age, and that God subjected to his government, not only men, but good and evil spirits, the fowls of the air, and the winds of heaven. They agree with the sacred writers in stating that he employed seven years in building the temple at Jerusalem.

Solomon's seal, and Solomon's ring, are highly celebrated by them, and to these they attribute a great variety of magical effects. They state that without his ring he had not the science of government; and having once lost

it, he did not remount his throne for forty days, as being destitute of that wisdom without which he could not decide according to truth and equity. But these things are probably spoken allegorically by their oldest writers. Of the throne of this prince they speak in terms of the most profound admiration. I have met with the most minute description of its magnificence, its ivory, gold, and jewels, and an estimate of its cost in lacs of rupees! According to those writers it had 12, 000 seats of gold on the right hand for patriarchs and prophets, and as many on the left for the doctors of the law, who assisted him in the distribution of justice.

In various parts of the Koran Solomon is spoken of in terms of the highest respect, and is represented as a true believer; though, through the envy of demons, magic and sorcery were attributed to him. Mohammed speaks of this in the second surat of his Koran. The story, in sum, is this: The devils, by God's permission, having tempted Solomon without success, made use of the following stratagem to blast his reputation: they wrote several books of magic, and hid them under his throne; and, after his death, told the chief men that if they wished to know by what means Solomon had obtained absolute dominion over men, genii, and the winds, they should dig under his throne. This they did, and found the aforesaid books full of impious superstitions. The better sort would not learn these incantations; but the common people did, and published them as the genuine works of Solomon. From this imputation the Koran justifies him, by saying, Solomon was not an unbeliever, surat 2. From the wonder-working signet and ring of the Asiatics came the Clavicle of Solomon, so celebrated among the Jewish rabbins, and the Christian occult philosophers; for such things found in Cornelius Agrippa, and such like writers, are not late inventions, but have descended from a very remote antiquity, as the Koran and the various commentators on it sufficiently prove. See Calmet and Sale.

The oriental traditions concerning this prince have been embodied in the Soliman Nameh of Ferdusi, in Persian, and in the Soliman Nameh of Uscobi, in Turkish. D'Herbelot mentions one of these histories in Persian verse, containing 1571 couplets.

Indeed, the traditions concerning the wonderful knowledge of Solomon, which abound so much in the East, are at least an indirect proof that many things relative to this prince have been preserved among them which are

not mentioned in our sacred books, but which they have blended so miserably with fables that it is impossible now to distinguish the precious from the vile.

Works attributed to Solomon have existed in different ages, from his time till the present. Eusebius states that Hezekiah, finding the Jews putting too much confidence in the books of Solomon, relative to cures and different occult arts, ordered them to be suppressed. Josephus positively says that Solomon did compose books of charms to cure diseases, and conjurations to expel demons, *Antiq.*, lib. viii., cap. 2. He states farther, that a Jew named Eliezar cured several demoniacs in the presence of Vespasian, by reciting the charms which had been invented by Solomon. R. D. Kimchi speaks of a book of Solomon entitled *The Cure of Diseases*, which Genebrard supposes to be the same work of which Josephus speaks. And Origen speaks of conjurations which were used by the Jews in his time, and which they professed to derive from the books of Solomon.

There are still extant books of this kind attributed to Solomon, such as *The Enchantments*, *The Clavicle*, *The Ring*, *The Hygromantia*, *The New Moons*, and *The Shadows of Ideas*; but these, as they now stand, are the inventions of quacks and impostors, and entitled to no regard. If there were any books containing the wisdom of Solomon, they are either irrecoverably lost, or exist in mutilated fragments among the Asiatic sages; and are disfigured by being connected with improbable tales, and pretended mantras or charms.

II. Hitherto we have looked only at the bright side of Solomon's character: we must now take a much less satisfactory view of this singular man; one in whom every thing great, glorious, wise, and holy, and every thing little, mean, foolish and impious, predominated by turns. He forsook the God of his mercies in a great variety of ways.

1. Whatever may be thought of the step in a political point of view, he most assuredly went out of the way of God's providence, and acted contrary to his law, in making affinity with Pharaoh's daughter. The sacred writers frequently refer to this; and it is never mentioned with approbation: it is rather associated with circumstances that place it in a reprehensible point of view. She was doubtless an idolater; and the

question of her becoming a proselyte is far from being satisfactorily settled. I believe she was the first means of drawing off his heart from the true God.

2. His expensive buildings obliging him to have recourse to a system of oppressive taxation, was another flaw in his character. Though with great zeal and honorable industry, and at great expense, he built a temple for the Lord, which he completed in seven years, yet the expense here was little in comparison of what was incurred by his own house, called the house of the forest of Lebanon, in which he spent incredible sums, and consumed nearly thirteen years; almost twice the time employed in building the temple at Jerusalem. This would have had no evil operation provided he had not been obliged to impose heavy taxes on his subjects, which produced an almost universal disaffection. Add to this, he had a most expensive household; one thousand women, part wives, part mistresses, would require immense riches to support their pomp and gratify their ambition. The people therefore justly complained of an establishment which, notwithstanding the riches brought into the country, must be both odious and oppressive.

3. He began his reign by an inauspicious act, the death of his brother Adonijah. This was a sin against God and nature: and no art of man can ever wash out its guilt. If state policy required it, which is very questionable, what had that to do with the feelings of humanity, and the love of God? On no pretense whatever is Solomon justified in this act.

4. His inordinate love of women. He had no doubt formed matrimonial alliances with all kingdoms and neighboring states, by taking their sisters and daughters to be his wives, to the fearful amount of no less than seven hundred! Politicians may endeavor to justify these acts by asserting, that in the Asiatic countries they were matters of a sound policy, rather than an argument of the prevalence of an irregular and unbridled passion. Let this stand for its value; but what can such apologists say for the additional three hundred concubines, for the taking of whom no such necessity can be pleaded? But even allowing that state policy might require such extensive alliances, what are we to say to the flagrant breaches of a most positive law of God? Most solemnly and most authoritatively had he said that his people should not give their daughters to the heathen, nor take the

daughters of the heathen to be their wives; lest they should turn their hearts away from serving the Lord. In the face of this most positive declaration, Solomon took wives of the most idolatrous of the surrounding nations; who succeeded, according to what was foretold in turning his heart away from God.

5. He became an idolater. He worshipped “Ashtaroth, the Venus of the Sidonians; Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites; Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites; and Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.” He did more: he built a temple to each of these; “and to all the gods of all his strange wives which burned incense, and sacrificed unto their gods,” 1 Kings 11:5-8.

6. By this time we may suppose that the light of God had entirely departed from his mind. He who knew so well the true God, now served him not; or, if he did, it was in conjunction with those idols, thus bringing the Supreme Being on a level with demons, or the figments of impure hearts and disordered fancies. We need not wonder at the tale of the mighty Samson betraying his life’s secret in the lap of Delilah; or of the unconquerable Hercules handling the distaff among the maids of Omphale, queen of Lydia; when we see the son of David, the once well-beloved of the Lord, the wisest of human beings, for the love of his millenary of wives and concubines, erecting temples to devils, and burning incense to them that were no gods; not considering that an idol is nothing in the world. To what an indescribable state of blindness and fatuity must this man have been brought, before he could have been capable of such acts as these! O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou fallen!

7. I have already hinted that Solomon’s oppressive taxation laid the foundation of that discontent which shortly after his death produced the separation of Israel and Judah; also the long and ruinous wars which drenched these states in blood: and this was doubtless the cause that ten-twelfths of the Jewish people became idolaters; which crime was punished, by the just judgments of God, by the Babylonish captivity, which lasted seventy years; and by the carrying away of the ten Israelitish tribes by the Assyrians, who are lost from the map of the universe, and no longer numbered among the children of men!

8. What greatly aggravates the whole of this most dismal tale is, that this strange defection from God, truth, reason, and common sense, was persisted in to his old age; or that in his old age, meaning undoubtedly his latter days, his wives turned away his heart from God. But his idolatry must have been of many years' standing; he meddled with it in his connection with the princes of Egypt; each of his idolatrous wives in succession increased the propensity: to chastise him for this very idolatry the Lord stirred up an adversary unto him, Hadad, the Edomite, and Rezon, the son of Eliadah, who was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, 1 Kings 11:14-25, which surely intimates that this idolatry was not the sin merely of his old age; as to chastise him for it Rezon was an adversary to Israel all his days. And as Solomon reigned forty years, we may fairly presume that a principal part of that time was spent in idolatrous practices.

9. This dismal account has a more dismal close still; for, in the same place in which we are informed of his apostasy, we are informed of his death, without the slightest intimation that he ever repented and turned to God. It is true that what is wanting in fact is supplied by conjecture; for it is firmly believed that "he did repent, and wrote the book of Ecclesiastes after his conversion, which is a decided proof of his repentance." I am sorry I cannot strengthen this opinion; of which I find not the shadow of a proof. 1. The book of Ecclesiastes, though it speaks much of the vanity of the creatures, yet speaks little or nothing of the vanity or sin of idolatry. 2. It is not the language of a man who was recovering from a state of the most awful backsliding. Is there any direct confession of sin in it? Is there any thing in it like the penitential confessions of his father, or like the lamentations of Jeremiah? Is there any where to be heard in it the sighing of a broken heart, or strong crying and tears to deprecate the justice and implore the mercy of a deeply offended God? Does it any where exhibit the language of a penitent, or expressions suitable to the state and circumstances of this supposed penitent king of Israel? Excellent as it is in its kind, is it any thing more than a valuable collection of experimental ethics, relative to the emptiness of the creature, and the folly of earthly pursuits and worldly anxieties? 3. Nor is it even past doubt that Solomon wrote this book: it certainly does in several places bear evidences of times posterior to those of Solomon. Eminent scholars have discerned a

deterioration in the style from the pure classical Hebrew, with an admixture of exotic terms that did not exist in the Hebrew language previously to the Babylonish captivity. But supposing that they are mistaken here, I still contend that it is not the language of a penitent soul. 4. It has been supposed, that, as Solomon was a type of Christ, it is not likely that he has finally perished. To this I answer, (1.) I know not that Solomon was a type of Christ. The reference to So 3:7; 8:11, 12, is to me no proof whatever of the point. (2.) Were it even otherwise, this would be no proof of his repentance, when the Scriptures are silent on the subject. The brazen serpent was a type of Christ, John 3:14, and was held in great veneration for a considerable time among the Jews; but when it became an incitement to idolatry, it was called nehushtan, a brazen trifle, taken down, and destroyed; 2 Kings 18:4. Typical persons and typical things may perish as well as others; the antitype alone will infallibly remain. 5. Finally, there seems every evidence that he died in his sins. His crimes were greatly aggravated: he forsook the Lord, who had appeared to him twice; his wives turned away his heart in his old age: there is not a single testimony in the Old or New Testament that intimates he died in a safe state. That awful denunciation of Divine justice stands point blank in the way of all contrary suppositions: "If thou forsake the Lord, he will cast thee off for ever," 1 Chronicles 28:9. He did forsake the Lord; and he forsook him in his very last days; and there is no evidence that he ever again clave to him. Ergo,

Reader, let him that standeth take heed lest he fall; not only foully but finally. Certainly, unconditional final perseverance will find little support in the case of Solomon. He was once most incontrovertibly in grace. He lost that grace and sinned most grievously against God. He was found in this state in his old age. He died, as far as the Scripture informs us, without repentance. Even the doubtfulness in which the bare letter of the Scripture leaves the eternal state of this man, is a blast of lightning to the syren song of "Once in grace, and still in grace;" "Once a child, and a child for ever."

I shall close these observations with the account given by Abul Farage, an Arabic writer of the thirteenth century, in his work entitled *The History of the Dynasties*, p. 55. "But in this Solomon transgressed, because towards the end of his life he took other women of foreign nations besides the daughter of Pharaoh; nations with whom God had forbidden the children of

Israel to form matrimonial alliances; but leaning towards their gods, he worshipped their idols. In the thirty-fourth year of his reign he built a house for idols in the mount which is opposite to Jerusalem; and the length of it was one hundred cubits, its breadth fifty, and its height thirty. He made also for himself golden shields, and a brazen sea, supported on the horns of brazen oxen. God reprov'd him for his infidelity, and gave him for punishment in this world that he took away from his son the greater part of the kingdom. Moreover, the duration of his reign was forty years; (Arabic) and he died without repentance, and was buried in the sepulcher of his father David.”

For other particulars relative to the different transactions of this reign, the reader is referred to the notes in the order of their occurrence; and to those treatises which have been written on the probability that Solomon did or did not repent of his idolatry: and also to the notes on Ecclesiastes, where the subject will be again reviewed.



## CHAPTER 12

*The people go to Shechem to make Rehoboam king, and send for Jeroboam out of Egypt, who with the heads of the tribes, requests relief from the heavy burdens laid on them by Solomon, 14. He requires three days to consider their petition, 5. He rejects the counsel of the elders, who served his father, and follows that of young men, and returns the people a provoking answer, 6-15. The people therefore renounce the family of David, stone to death Adoram, who came to receive their tribute, and make Jeroboam king; none cleaving to Rehoboam but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, 16-20. Rehoboam comes to Jerusalem, and assembles all the fighting men of Judah and Benjamin, and finds the number to be one hundred and eighty thousand; and with these he purposes to reduce the men of Israel to his allegiance, but is forbidden by the Prophet Shemaiah, 21-24. Jeroboam builds Shechem in Mount Ephraim and Penuel, 25. And lest the people should be drawn away from their allegiance to him by going up to Jerusalem to worship, he makes two golden calves, and sets them up, one in Dan, the other in Beth-el, and the people worship them, 26-30. He makes priests of the lowest of the people, and establishes the fifteenth day of the eighth month as a feast to his new gods; makes offerings, and burns incense, 31-33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1. *Rehoboam went to Shechem*** Rehoboam was probably the only son of Solomon; for although he had a thousand wives, he had not the blessing of a numerous offspring; and although he was the wisest of men himself, his son was a poor, unprincipled fool. Had Solomon kept himself within reasonable bounds in matrimonial affairs, he would probably have had more children; and such as would have had common sense enough to discern the delicacy of their situation, and rule according to reason and religion.

**Verse 4. *The grievous service-and-heavy yoke*** They seem here to complain of two things-excessively laborious service, and a heavy taxation.

At first it is supposed Solomon employed no Israelite in drudgery: afterwards, when he forsook the God of compassion, he seems to have used them as slaves, and to have revived the Egyptian bondage.

**Verse 7. *If thou wilt be a servant unto this people*** This is a constitutional idea of a king: he is the servant, but not the slave of his people; every regal act of a just king is an act of service to the state. The king is not only the fountain of law and justice; but as he has the appointment of all officers and judges, consequently he is the executor of the laws; and all justice is administered in his name. Properly speaking, a good and constitutional king is the servant of his people; and in being such he is their father and their king.

***They will be thy servants for ever.*** The way to insure the obedience of the people is to hold the reins of empire with a steady and impartial hand; let the people see that the king lives for them, and not for himself; and they will obey, love, and defend him. The state is maintained on the part of the ruler and the ruled by mutual acts of service and benevolence. A good king has no self-interest; and such a king will ever have obedient and loving subjects. The haughty, proud tyrant will have a suspicious and jealous people, hourly ripening for revolt. The king is made for the people, not the people for the king. Let every potentate wisely consider this; and let every subject know that the heaviest cares rest on the heart, and the heaviest responsibility rests on the head, of the king. Let them therefore, under his government, fashion themselves as obedient children; acknowledge him their head; and duly consider whose authority he has; that they may love, honor and obey him. Happy are the people who have such a king; safe is the king who has such a people.

**Verse 10. *And the young men that were grown up with him*** It was a custom in different countries to educate with the heir to the throne young noblemen of nearly the same age. This, as Calmet observes, answered two great and important ends:-1. It excited the prince to emulation; that he might, as far as possible, surpass in all manly exercises, and in all acts of prudence and virtue, those whom one day he was to surpass in the elevation and dignity of his station. 2. That he might acquire a correct knowledge of the disposition and views of those who were likely to be, under him, the highest officers of the state; and consequently, know the

better how to trust and employ them. The old counsellors Rehoboam did not know; with the young nobility he had been familiar.

***My little finger shall be thicker*** A proverbial mode of expression: “My little finger is thicker than my father’s thigh.” As much as the thigh surpasses the little finger in thickness, so much does my power exceed that of my father; and the use that I shall make of it, to employ and tax you, shall be in proportion.

**Verse 11. *Chastise you with scorpions*** Should you rebel, or become disaffected, my father’s whip shall be a scorpion in my hand. His was chastisement, mine shall be punishment. St. Isidore, and after him Calmet and others, assert that the scorpion was a sort of severe whip, the lashes of which were armed with iron points, that sunk into and tore the flesh. We know that the scorpion was a military engine among the Romans for shooting arrows, which, being poisoned, were likened to the scorpion’s sting, and the wound it inflicted.

**Verse 15. *The cause was from the Lord*** God left him to himself, and did not incline his heart to follow the counsel of the wise men. This is making the best of our present version; but if we come to inquire into the meaning of the CAUSE of all this confusion and anarchy, we shall find it was Rehoboam’s folly, cruelty, and despotic tyranny: and was this from the Lord? But does the text speak this bad doctrine? No: it says סִבְּחָה sibbah, the REVOLUTION, was from the Lord. This is consistent with all the declarations which went before. God stirred up the people to revolt from a man who had neither skill nor humanity to govern them. We had such a סִבְּחָה revolution in these nations in 1688; and, thank God, we have never since needed another. None of our ancient translations understood the word as our present version does: they have it either the TURNING AWAY was from the Lord, or it was the Lord’s ORDINANCE; viz., that they should turn away from this foolish king.

**Verse 16. *So Israel departed unto their tents*** That is, the ten tribes withdrew their allegiance from Rehoboam; only Judah and Benjamin, frequently reckoned one tribe, remaining with him.

**Verse 18. *King Rehoboam sent Adoram*** As this was the person who was superintendent over the tribute, he was probably sent to collect the

ordinary taxes; but the people, indignant at the master who had given them such a brutish answer, stoned the servant to death. The sending of Adoram to collect the taxes, when the public mind was in such a state of fermentation, was another proof of Rehoboam's folly and incapacity to govern.

**Verse 20. *Made him king over all Israel*** What is called Israel here, was ten-twelfths of the whole nation; and had they a right to call another person to the throne? They had not,-they had neither legal nor constitutional right. Jeroboam was not of the blood royal; he had no affinity to the kingdom. Nothing could justify this act, but the just judgment of God. God thus punished a disobedient and gainsaying people; and especially Solomon's family, whose sins against the Lord were of no ordinary magnitude.

**Verse 24. *For this thing is from me.*** That is, the separation of the ten tribes from the house of David.

***They-returned to depart*** This was great deference, both in Rehoboam and his officers, to relinquish, at the demand of the prophet, a war which they thought they had good grounds to undertake. The remnant of the people heard the Divine command gratefully, for the mass of mankind are averse from war. No nations would ever rise up against each other, were they not instigated to it or compelled by the rulers.

**Verse 27. *And they shall kill me*** He found he had little cause to trust this fickle people; though they had declared for him it was more from caprice, desire of change, and novelty, than from any regular and praiseworthy principle.

**Verse 28. *Made two calves of gold*** He invented a political religion, instituted feasts in his own times different from those appointed by the Lord, gave the people certain objects of devotion, and pretended to think it would be both inconvenient and oppressive to them to have to go up to Jerusalem to worship. This was not the last time that religion was made a state engine to serve political purposes. It is strange that in pointing out his calves to the people, he should use the same words that Aaron used when he made the golden calf in the wilderness, when they must have heard what terrible judgments fell upon their forefathers for this idolatry.

**Verse 29. *One in Beth-el, and the other-in Dan.*** One at the southern and the other at the northern extremity of the land. Solomon's idolatry had prepared the people for Jeroboam's abominations!

**Verse 31. *A house of high places*** A temple of temples; he had many high places in the land, and to imitate the temple at Jerusalem, he made one chief over all the rest, where he established a priesthood of his own ordination. Probably a place of separate appointment, where different idols were set up and worshipped; so it was a sort of pantheon.

***Made priests of the lowest of the people*** He took the people indifferently as they came, and made them priests, till he had enough, without troubling himself whether they were of the family of Aaron or the house of Levi, or not. Any priests would do well enough for such gods. But those whom he took seem to have been worthless, good-for-nothing fellows, who had neither piety nor good sense. Probably the sons of Levi had grace enough to refuse to sanction this new priesthood and idolatrous worship.

**Verse 32. *Ordained a feast*** The Jews held their feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the seventh month; Jeroboam, who would meet the prejudices of the people as far as he could, appointed a similar feast on the fifteenth of the eighth month; thus appearing to hold the thing while he subverted the ordinance.

**Verse 33. *He offered upon the altar*** Jeroboam probably performed the functions of high priest himself, that he might in his own person condense the civil and ecclesiastical power.

## CHAPTER 13

*A man of God prophesies against Jeroboam's altar, and foretells the destruction of that altar, and of its idolatrous priests by Josiah; and gives Jeroboam a sign that the prophecy should be accomplished, 1-3. Jeroboam is enraged, and orders the man of God to be seized; and stretching out his hand for this purpose, his arm dries up, 4. The altar is rent, and the ashes poured out, according to the sign given by the man of God; and at his intercession Jeroboam's arm is restored, 5, 6. Jeroboam wishes to engage him in his service, but he refuses, and tells him that he was ordered by God not even to eat or drink in that place; and he accordingly departs, 7-10. An old prophet that dwelt at Beth-el, hearing of this, rides after the man of God; deceives him; brings him back to his house, and persuades him to eat and drink, 11-19. While he is eating, the word of the Lord comes to the old prophet, and he foretells the death of the man of God; who departing is met by a lion, and slain, 20-25. On hearing this, the old prophet goes to the place, finds the carcass, brings it home, burns it, and mourns over it, charging his sons to bury him, when dead, in the same grave, 26-32. Notwithstanding these warnings, Jeroboam continues in his idolatry, 33, 34.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. *There came a man of God*** Who this was we know not. The Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic call him a prophet. The Vulgate and Septuagint follow the Hebrew, **אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים** ish elohim means a Divine person, one wholly devoted to God's service. Some have thought it was Shemaiah, others Joel, and others Iddo. It could not have been the latter, for he wrote the acts of Jeroboam, 2 Chronicles 9:29, and the prophet was killed before he returned home; but conjecture is idle on such a subject.

***Jeroboam stood by the altar*** Like gods, like priest; he made himself high priest, and he took of the lowest of the people, and made them priests of the high places; they proved themselves to be fools by worshipping calves.

**Verse 2. *He cried against the altar*** He denounced the destruction of this idolatrous system.

***A child shall be born-Josiah by name*** This is one of the most remarkable and most singular prophecies in the Old Testament. It here most circumstantially foretells a fact which took place three hundred and forty years after the prediction; a fact which was attested by the two nations. The Jews, in whose behalf this prophecy was delivered, would guard it most sacredly; and it was the interest of the Israelites, against whom it was levelled, to impugn its authenticity and expose its falsehood, had this been possible. This prediction not only showed the knowledge of God, but his power. He gave, as it were, this warning to idolatry, that it might be on its guard, and defend itself against this Josiah whenever a person of that name should be found sitting on the throne of David; and no doubt it was on the alert, and took all prudent measures for its own defense; but all in vain, for Josiah, in the eighteenth year of his reign, literally accomplished this prophecy, as we may read, 2 Kings 23:15-20. And from this latter place we find that the prophecy had three permanent testimonials of its truth. 1. The house of Israel; 2. The house of Judah; and, 3. The tomb of the prophet who delivered this prophecy, who, being slain by a lion, was brought back and buried at Beth-el, the superscription on whose tomb remained till the day on which Josiah destroyed that altar, and burnt dead men's bones upon it. See above, verses 16-18. {2 Kings 23:16-18}

**Verse 3. *And he gave a sign*** A miracle to prove that the prophecy should be fulfilled in its season.

**Verse 4. *Lay hold on him***. No doubt, stretching out his own hand at the same time, through rage, pride, and haste, to execute his own orders.

***And his hand dried up*** The whole arm became suddenly rigid; the nerves no longer communicated their influence, and the muscles ceased to obey the dictates of the will.

**Verse 5. *The altar was also rent*** It split or clave of its own accord; and, as the split parts would decline at the top from the line of their perpendicular, so the ashes and coals would fall off, or be poured out.

**Verse 6. *Entreat-the face of the Lord thy God*** The face of God is his favor, as we see in many parts of the sacred writings. He says, thy God;

for Jeroboam knew that he was not his God, for he was now in the very act of acknowledging other gods, and had no portion in the God of Jacob.

***And the king's hand was restored*** Both miracles were wrought to show the truth of the Jewish religion, and to convince this bold innovator of his wickedness, and to reclaim him from the folly and ruinous tendency of his idolatry.

**Verse 7. *Come home with me-and I will give thee a reward.*** Come and be one of my priests, and I will give thee a proper salary.

**Verse 9. *For so it was charged me-Eat no bread, etc.*** That is, Have no kind of communication with those idolaters. He was charged also not to return by the way that he came; probably lest the account of what was done should have reached the ears of any of the people through whom he had passed, and he suffer inconveniences on the account, either by persecution from the idolaters, or from curious people delaying him, in order to cause him to give an account of the transactions which took place at Beth-el. This is a reason why he should not return by the same way; but what the reason of this part of the charge was, if not the above, is not easy to see.

**Verse 11. *An old prophet*** Probably once a prophet of the Lord, who had fallen from his steadfastness, and yet not so deeply as to lose the knowledge of the true God, and join with Jeroboam in his idolatries. We find he was not at the king's sacrifice, though his sons were there; and perhaps even they were there, not as idolaters, but as spectators of what was done.

**Verse 14. *And went after the man of God*** I can hardly think that this was with any evil design. His sons had given him such an account of the prediction, the power, and influence of this prophet, that he wished to have a particular acquaintance with him, in order that he might get farther information relative to the solemn import of the prophecy which he had denounced against the idolatry at Beth-el. This good man could not have been an object of the old prophet's malevolence.

**Verse 18. *An angel spake unto me*** That he lied unto him is here expressly asserted, and is amply proved by the event. But why should he deceive him? The simple principle of curiosity to know all about this



prediction, and the strange facts which had taken place, of which he had heard at second hand by means of his sons, was sufficient to induce such a person to get the intelligence he wished by any means. We may add to this, that, as he found the man of God sitting under an oak, probably faint with fatigue and fasting, for he had had no refreshment, his humanity might have led him to practice this deception, in order to persuade him to take some refreshment. Having fallen from God, as I have supposed, 1 Kings 13:11, his own tenderness of conscience was gone; and he would not scruple to do a moral evil, if even a temporal good could come of it. Again, is it not possible that the old prophet was himself deceived? for, though he lied unto him, it is possible that he was not conscious of his lie, for Satan, as an angel of light, might have deceived him in order to lead him to deceive the other. He does not say, as the man of God did, It was said to me by the word of the Lord; no: but, An angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord. And I think it very likely that an angel did appear to him on the occasion; an angel of darkness and idolatry, in the garb of an angel of light, who wished to use him as an instrument to bring discredit on the awful transactions which had lately taken place, and to destroy him who had foretold the destruction of his power and influence.

**Verse 19. *So he went back with him*** He permitted himself to be imposed on; he might have thought, as he had accomplished every purpose for which God sent him, and had actually begun to return by another way, God, who had given him the charge, had authority to say, “As thy purpose was to obey every injunction, even to the letter, I now permit thee to go with this old prophet, and take some refreshment.” Now God might as well have dispensed with this part of the injunction, as he did in the case of Abraham: Take thy son Isaac, thy only son, whom thou lovest-and offer him for a burnt-offering; but, when he saw his perfect readiness, he dispensed with the actual offering, and accepted a ram in his stead. Thus much may be said in vindication of the man of God: but if this be so, why should he be punished with death, for doing what he had reason and precedent to believe might be the will of God? I answer: He should not have taken a step back, till he had remission of the clause from the same authority which gave him the general message. He should have had it from the word of the Lord to himself, in both cases, as Abraham had; and not taken an apparent contradiction of what was before delivered

unto him, from the mouth of a stranger, who only professed to have it from an angel, who pretended to speak unto him by the word of the Lord. In this, and in this alone, lay the sinfulness of the act of the man of God, who came out of Judah.

**Verse 20. *The word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back*** “A great clamor,” says Dr. Kennicott, “has been raised against this part of the history, on account of God’s denouncing sentence on the true prophet by the mouth of the false prophet: but if we examine with attention the original words here, they will be found to signify either he who brought him back; or, whom he had brought back; for the very same words, אֲשֶׁר הֵשִׁיבוּ *asher heshibo*, occur again in 1 Kings 13:23, where they are now translated, whom he had brought back; and where they cannot be translated otherwise. This being the case, we are at liberty to consider the word of the Lord as delivered to the true prophet thus brought back; and then the sentence is pronounced by GOD himself, calling to him out of heaven, as in Genesis 22:11. And that this doom was thus pronounced by God, not by the false prophet, we are assured in 1 Kings 13:26: ‘The Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, according to the word of the Lord which HE spake unto him.’ Josephus expressly asserts that the sentence was declared by God to the true prophet.” The Arabic asserts the same.

**Verse 21. *And he*** That is, according to the above interpretation, the voice of God from heaven addressing the man of God, the old prophet having nothing to do in this business.

**Verse 22. *Thy carcass shall not come*** This intimated to him that he was to die an untimely death, but probably did not specify by what means.

**Verse 24. *A lion met him-and slew him*** By permitting himself to be seduced by the old prophet, when he should have acted only on the expressly declared counsel of God, he committed the sin unto death; that is, such a sin as God will punish with the death of the body, while he extends mercy to the soul. See my notes on 1 John 5:16, 17.

From the instance here related, we see, as in various other cases, that often judgment begins at the house of God. The true prophet, for receiving that as a revelation from God which was opposed to the revelation which

himself had received, and which was confirmed by so many miracles, is slain by a lion, and his body deprived of the burial of his fathers; while the wicked king, and the old fallen prophet, are both permitted to live! If this was severity to the man of God, it was mercy to the others, neither of whom was prepared to meet his judge. Here we may well say, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

**Verse 28. *The lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass.*** All here was preternatural. The lion, though he had killed the man, does not devour him; the ass stands quietly by, not fearing the lion; and the lion does not attempt to tear the ass: both stand as guardians of the fallen prophet. How evident is the hand of God in all!

**Verse 30. *Alas, my brothers*** This lamentation is very simple, very short, and very pathetic. Perhaps the old prophet said it as much in reference to himself, who had been the cause of his untimely death, as in reference to the man of God, whose corpse he now committed to the tomb. But the words may be no more than the burden of each line of the lamentation which was used on this occasion. See instances of this among the Asiatics in the note on Jeremiah 22:18.

**Verse 31. *Lay my bones beside his bones*** This argues a strong conviction in the mind of the old prophet, that the deceased was a good and holy man of God; and he is willing to have place with him in the general resurrection.

**Verse 32. *In the cities of Samaria*** It is most certain that Samaria, or as it is called in Hebrew Shomeron, was not built at this time. We are expressly told that Omri, king of Israel, founded this city on the hill which he bought for two talents of silver, from a person of the name of Shemer, after whom he called the city Samaria or Shomeron; (see 1 Kings 16:24;) and this was fifty years after the death of Jeroboam. How then could the old prophet speak of Samaria, not then in existence, unless he did it by the spirit of prophecy, calling things that are not as though they were; as the man of God called Josiah by name three hundred years before he was born? Some suppose that the historian adds these words because Samaria existed in his time, and he well knew that it did not exist in the time of the old prophet; for himself, in the sixteenth chapter, gives us the account of its foundation by Omri. After all, it is possible that God might have given this revelation

to the old prophet; and thus by anticipation which is the language of prophecy, spoke of Samaria as then existing. This is the solution of Houbigant, and is thought sound by many good critics.

**Verse 33. *Jeroboam returned not from his evil way*** There is something exceedingly obstinate and perverse, as well as blinding and infatuating, in idolatry. The prediction lately delivered at Beth-el, and the miracles wrought in confirmation of it, were surely sufficient to have affected and alarmed any heart, not wholly and incorrigibly hardened; and yet they had no effect on Jeroboam!

***Made-the lowest of the people priests*** So hardy was this bad man in his idolatry that he did not even attempt to form any thing according to the model of God's true worship: he would have nothing like God and truth. In his calves, or rather oxen, he copied the manner of Egypt; and in the formation of his priesthood, he seems to have gone aside from all models. Amongst the worst of heathens, the priesthood was filled with respectable men; but Jeroboam took of the lowest of the people, and put them in that office.

***Whosoever would, he consecrated him*** He made no discrimination: any vagabond that offered was accepted even of those who had no character, who were too idle to work, and too stupid to learn.

**Verse 34. *And this thing became sin*** These abominations were too glaring, and too insulting to the Divine Majesty, to be permitted to last; therefore his house was cut off, and destroyed from the face of the earth.

A HOLY priesthood, a righteous ministry, is a blessing to any state, because it has a most powerful effect on the morals of the community; inducing order, sobriety, and habits of industry, among the people: on the contrary, the profligacy of the clergy, and false principles of religion, are the most likely to unsettle a kingdom, and to bring about destructive revolutions in the state. This is the principle on which all national establishments of religion were originally formed. The state thought proper to secure a permanency of religion, that religion might secure the safety of the state; because it was supposed from the general aversion of men from good, that, if left to themselves, they would have no religion at all. Where the religion of the country is pure, founded solely on the oracles of God, it

deserves the utmost sanction of the state, as well as the attention of every individual. A Christian state has surely authority to enact, The Christian religion is and shall be the religion of this land; and, prejudice apart, should not the laws provide for the permanence of this system? Is the form of Christianity likely to be preserved in times of general profligacy, if the laws do not secure its permanence? What would our nation have been if we had not had a version of the sacred writings established by the authority of the laws: and a form of sound words for general devotion established by the same authority? Whatever the reader may do the writer thanks God for the religious establishment of his country. For abuses in church or state, he is the last to contend.

## CHAPTER 14

*Abijah, son of Jeroboam, falls sick, 1. Jeroboam sends his wife disguised to Ahijah the prophet, and with her a present, to inquire concerning his son, 2-4. Ahijah discovers her by a Divine intimation and delivers to her a heavy message concerning the destruction of Jeroboam's house, and the death of her son, 5-16. The child dies, according to the prediction of Ahijah, 17. Jeroboam's reign and death, 18-20. Rehoboam's bad reign, and the apostasy of Judah, 21-24. Shishak, king of Egypt, invades Judea, spoils the temple, and takes away the golden shields made by Solomon; instead of which Rehoboam makes others of brass, 25-28. Rehoboam's reign and death, 29-31.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 1. *Abijah-fell sick*** This was but a prelude to the miseries which fell on the house of Jeroboam; but it was another merciful warning, intended to turn him from his idolatry and wickedness.

**Verse 3. *Ten loaves*** Probably common or household bread.

***Cracknels*** נִקְדִּים nikkuddim, spotted, or perforated bread; thin cakes, pierced through with many holes, the same as is called Jews' bread to the present day, and used by them at the passover. It was customary to give presents to all great personages; and no person consulted a prophet without bringing something in his hand.

**Verse 5. *Feign herself to be another woman.*** It would have been discreditable to Jeroboam's calves, if it had been known that he had consulted a prophet of Jehovah.

**Verse 8. *And rent the kingdom away from the house of David*** That is, permitted it to be rent, because of the folly and insolence of Rehoboam.

**Verse 10. *Him that pisseth against the wall*** Every male. The phrase should be thus rendered wherever it occurs.

**Verse 11. *Shall the dogs eat*** They shall not have an honorable burial: and shall not come into the sepulchres of their fathers.

**Verse 13. *In him there is found some good thing*** Far be it from God to destroy the righteous with the wicked; God respects even a little good, because it is a seed from himself. The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed.

**Verse 15. *For the Lord shall smite Israel*** See this prophecy fulfilled, 1 Kings 15:28-30, when Baasha destroyed all the house and posterity of Jeroboam.

**Verse 19. *The rest of the acts of Jeroboam-are written in the-chronicles*** For some important particulars relative to this reign, see 2 Chronicles 13:1-20.

**Verse 24. *There were also sodomites in the land*** קִדְּשִׁים kedeshim, consecrated persons; persons who had devoted themselves, in practices of the greatest impurity, to the service of the most impure idols.

**Verse 26. *He took away the treasures*** All the treasures which Solomon had amassed, both in the temple and in his own houses; a booty the most immense ever acquired in one place.

***All the shields of gold which Solomon had made.*** These were three hundred in number, and were all made of beaten gold. See a computation of their value in the note on 1 Kings 10:17.

**Verse 28. *The guard bare them*** The guard probably were just three hundred, answering to the number of the shields.

**Verse 31. *Naamah an Ammonitess.*** He was born of a heathen mother, and begotten of an apostate father. From such an impure fountain could sweet water possibly spring?

***Abijam his son reigned in his stead.*** Though righteousness cannot be propagated, because it is supernatural, yet unrighteousness may, for that is a genuine offspring of nature. Abijam was the wicked son of an apostate father and heathenish mother. Grace may be grafted on a crab stock; but let none do evil that good may come of it. A bad stock will produce bad fruit.

Dr. Kennicott observes that the name of this king of Judah is now expressed three ways: here and in four other places it is Abijam or Abim; in two others it is Abihu, but in eleven other places it is Abiah, as it is expressed by St. Matthew, Matthew 1:7,



## CHAPTER 15

*Abijam's wicked reign, and death, 1-8. Asa succeeds him in the kingdom of Judah, and rules well, 9-15. He makes a league with the king of Syria against Baasha king of Israel, who is obliged to desist in his attempts against Judah, 16-22. He is diseased in his feet and dies, and is succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat, 23-25. Nadab, son of Jeroboam, reigns over Israel; but is slain by Baasha, who reigns in his stead, 26-28. Baasha destroys all the house of Jeroboam, according to the prediction of Ahijah, 29, 30. Baasha continues the idolatry of Jeroboam, 31-34.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1. *Reigned Abijam over Judah.*** Of this son of Rehoboam, of his brethren, and of Rehoboam's family in general, see 2 Chron. 12, where many particulars are added.

**Verse 3. *His heart was not perfect*** He was an idolater, or did not support the worship of the true God. This appears to be the general meaning of the heart not being perfect with God.

**Verse 4. *The Lord-give him a lamp*** That is, a son to succeed him; see 1 Kings 11:36.

**Verse 5. *Save only in the matter of Uriah*** Properly speaking, this is the only flagrant fault or crime in the life of David. It was a horrible offense, or rather a whole system of offenses. See the notes on 2 Samuel 11, and 12.

**Verse 6. *There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam*** This was mentioned in the preceding chapter, 1 Kings 14:30, and it can mean no more than this: there was a continual spirit of hostility kept up between the two kingdoms, and no doubt frequent skirmishing between bordering parties; but it never broke out into open war, for this was particularly forbidden. See 1 Kings 12:24. Hostility did exist, and no doubt frequent skirmishes; but open war and pitched battles there were none.

But why is this circumstance repeated, and the history of Abijam interrupted by the repetition? There is some reason to believe that Rehoboam is not the true reading, and that it should be Abijam: “Now there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.” And this is the reading of fourteen of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS. The Syriac has Abia the son of Rehoboam; the Arabic has Abijam. In the Septuagint the whole verse is omitted in the London Polyglot, but it is extant in those of Complutum and Antwerp. Some copies of the Targum have Abijam also, and the Editio Princeps of the Vulgate has Abia. This is doubtless the true reading, as we know there was a very memorable war between Abia and Jeroboam; see it particularly described 2 Chronicles 13:3, etc.

**Verse 10. *His mother’s name*** Our translators thought that grandmother was likely to be the meaning, and therefore have put it in the margin.

***The daughter of Abishalom.*** She is called, says Calmet, the daughter of Absalom, according to the custom of the Scriptures, which give the name of daughter indifferently to the niece, the grand-daughter, and great grand-daughter.

**Verse 12. *The sodomites*** **הקדשים** *hakkedeshim*; literally, the holy or consecrated ones. See on 1 Kings 14:24.

**Verse 13. *She had made an idol in a grove*** The original word, **מפלצת** *miphletseth*, is variously understood. I shall give its different views in the versions:—

“Besides, he removed his mother Maacha from being chief in the sacred rites of Priapus, and in his grove which she had consecrated.” -VULGATE.

“***And Ana***, [other copies ***Maacha***,] he removed from being governess, because she had made an assembly in her grove.” -SEPTUAGINT.

“Moreover, he deprived Maacha, his mother, of her own magnificence, because she had celebrated a solemnity to her own worship.” -SYRIAC.

“And even Maacha, his mother, he removed from the kingdom, because she had made an idol in a grove.” -CHALDEE.

“Besides, he removed Maacha, his mother, from her kingdom, because she had made a high tree into an idol.” -ABABIC.

“Also he removed Maacha, his mother, from the kingdom, because she had made a horrible statue; and our rabbins say that it was called **מפלצת** miphletseth, because **מפליא ליצנותא** maphli leytsanutha, it produced wonderful ridicule; for she made it ad instar membri virilis, and she used it daily.” -RABBI SOLOMON JARCHI.

From the whole, it is pretty evident that the image was a mere Priapus, or something of the same nature, and that Maachah had an assembly in the grove where this image was set up, and doubtless worshipped it with the most impure rites. What the Roman Priapus was I need not tell the learned reader; and as to the unlearned, it would not profit him to know. Maachah was most likely another Messalina; and Asa probably did for his mother what Claudius did for his wife.

**Verse 14. *The high places were not removed*** He was not able to make a thorough reformation; this was reserved for his son Jehoshaphat.

***Asa's heart was perfect*** He worshipped the true God, and zealously promoted his service; see on 1 Kings 15:3. And even the high places which he did not remove were probably those where the true God alone was worshipped; for that there were such high places the preceding history amply proves, and Jarchi intimates that these were places which individuals had erected for the worship of Jehovah.

**Verse 15. *Which his father had dedicated*** On what account he and his father dedicated the things mentioned below, we know not; but it appears that Asa thought himself bound by the vow of his father.

**Verse 16. *There was war*** That is, there was continual enmity; see on 1 Kings 15:6. But there was no open war till the thirty-sixth year of Asa, when Baasha, king of Israel, began to build Ramah, that he might prevent all communication between Israel and Judah; see 2 Chronicles 15:19; 16:1. But this does not agree with what is said here, 1 Kings 16:8, 9, that Elah, the son and successor of Baasha, was killed by Zimri, in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Asa. Chronologers endeavor to reconcile this by saying that the years should be reckoned, not from the beginning of the reign of

Asa, but from the separation of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. It is most certain that Baasha could not make war upon Asa in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, when it is evident from this chapter that he was dead in the twenty-sixth year of that king. We must either adopt the mode of solution given by chronologists, or grant that there is a mistake in some of the numbers; most likely in the parallel places in Chronicles, but which we have no direct means of correcting. But the reader may compare 2 Chronicles 14:1, with 2 Chronicles 15:10, 19; 16:1.

**Verse 17. *And Baasha-built Ramah*** As the word signifies a high place, what is here termed Ramah was probably a hill, (commanding a defile through which lay the principal road to Jerusalem,) which Baasha fortified in order to prevent all intercourse with the kingdom of Judah, lest his subjects should cleave to the house of David. Ramah was about two leagues northward of Jerusalem.

**Verse 18. *Asa took all the silver*** Shishak, king of Egypt, had not taken the whole, or there had been some treasures brought in since that time.

***Ben-hadad*** This was the grandson of Rezon, called here Hezion, who founded the kingdom of Damascus. See 1 Kings 11:23, 24; and Calmet.

**Verse 19. *There is a league between me and thee*** Or, Let there be a league between me and thee; as there was between my father and thy father. There was no reason why Asa should have emptied his treasures at this time to procure the aid of the Syrian king; as it does not appear that there was any danger which himself could not have turned aside. He probably wished to destroy the kingdom of Israel; and to effect this purpose, even robbed the house of the Lord.

**Verse 20. *Ijon, and Dan, etc.*** He appears to have attacked and taken those towns which constituted the principal strength of the kingdom of Israel.

**Verse 21. *Dwelt in Tirzah.*** This seems to have been the royal city; see 1 Kings 15:33, and 1 Kings 14:17; and in this Baasha was probably obliged to shut himself up.

**Verse 22. *None was exempted*** Every man was obliged to go and help to dismantle the fortress at Ramah which Baasha had built. This was a general

levee en masse of the people: every one was obliged to lend a helping hand, as the state was then supposed to be in danger, and all exemptions necessarily ceased. This is a maxim of civil policy, *Ubi adversus hostem muniendi sent limites, omnis immunitas cessat*: “Where the boundaries are to be fortified against an enemy, then all exemptions cease.”

**Verse 23. *And the cities which he built*** Such as Geba and Mizpah, which he built out of the spoils of Ramah.

***He was diseased in his feet.*** Probably he had a strong rheumatic affection, or the gout. This took place in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, three years before his death; and it is said that he sought to physicians rather than to the Lord, 2 Chronicles 16:12, 13.

**Verse 24. *Asa slept with his fathers*** Of his splendid and costly funeral we read 1 Chronicles 16:14.

**Verse 25. *Nadab-began to reign over Israel*** He began his reign in the second year of the reign of Asa, and reigned two years.

**Verse 27. *Smote him at Gabbethon*** This was a city in the tribe of Dan, and generally in the possession of the Philistines.

**Verse 29. *He smote all the house of Jeroboam*** This was according to Ahijah’s prophetic declaration; see 1 Kings 14:10, 14. Thus God made use of one wicked man to destroy another.

**Verse 32. *There was war*** See on 1 Kings 15:16.

**Verse 34. *Walked in the way of Jeroboam*** The entail of iniquity cannot be cut off but by a thorough conversion of the soul to God; and of this, these bad kings seem to have had no adequate notion. The wicked followed the steps of the wicked, and became still more wicked; sin gathers strength by exercise and age.

## CHAPTER 16

*Jehu the prophet denounces the destruction of Baasha, 1-7. Zimri conspires against him, and slays him and his family, and reigns seven days, 8-15. The people make Omri king, and besiege Zimri in Tirzah; who, finding no way to escape, sets fire to his palace, and consumes himself in it, 16-20. The people are divided, half following Tibni, and half Omri; the latter faction overcomes the former, Tibni is slain, and Omri reigns alone, 21-23. He founds Samaria, 24. His bad character and death, 25-28. Ahab reigns in his stead; marries Jezebel, restores idolatry, and exceeds his predecessors in wickedness, 29-33. Hiel the Beth-elite rebuilds Jericho, 34.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 1. *Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu*** Of this prophet we know nothing but from this circumstance. It appears from 2 Chronicles 16:7-10, that his father Hanani was also a prophet, and suffered imprisonment in consequence of the faithful discharge of his ministry to Asa.

**Verse 2. *Made thee prince over my people*** That is, in the course of my providence, I suffered thee to become king; for it is impossible that God should make a rebel, a traitor, and a murderer, king over his people, or over any people. God is ever represented in Scripture as doing those things which, in the course of his providence, he permits to be done.

**Verse 7. *And because he killed him.*** This the Vulgate understands of Jehu the prophet, put to death by Baasha: *Obidiah hanc causam occidit eum, hoc est. Jehu filium Hanani prophetam*; "On this account he killed him, that is, Jehu the prophet, the son of Hanani." Some think Baasha is intended, others Jeroboam, and others Nadab the son of Jeroboam. This last is the sentiment of Rab. Sol. Jarchi, and of some good critics. The order is here confused; and the seventh verse should probably be placed between the 4th and 5th.

**Verse 9. *Captain of half his chariots*** It is probable that Zimri, and some other who is not here named, were commanders of the cavalry.

**Verse 11. *He slew all the house of Baasha*** He endeavored to exterminate his race, and blot out his memory; and the Jews say, when such a matter is determined, they not only destroy the house of the person himself, but the five neighboring houses, that the memory of such a person may perish from the earth.

**Verse 13. *For all the sins of Baasha*** We see why it was that God permitted such judgments to fall on this family. Baasha was a grievous offender, and so also was his son Elah; and they caused the people to sin; and they provoked God to anger by their idolatries.

**Verse 15. *The people were encamped against Gibbethon*** It appears that, at this time, the Israelites had war with the Philistines, and were now besieging Gibbethon, one of their cities. This army, hearing that Zimri had rebelled and killed Elah, made Omri, their general, king, who immediately raised the siege of Gibbethon, and went to attack Zimri in the royal city of Tirzah; who, finding his affairs desperate, chose rather to consume himself in his palace than to fall into the hands of his enemies.

**Verse 21. *Divided into two parts*** Why this division took place we cannot tell; the people appear to have been for Tibni, the army for Omri; and the latter prevailed.

**Verse 23. *In the thirty and first year of Asa*** There must be a mistake here in the number thirty-one; for, in ver. 10 and 15, {1 Kings 16:10, 15} it is said that Zimri slew his master, and began to reign in the twenty-seventh year of Asa; and as Zimri reigned only seven days, and Omri immediately succeeded him, this could not be in the thirty-first, but in the twenty-seventh year of Asa, as related above. Rab. Sol. Jarchi reconciles the two places thus: "The division of the kingdom between Tibni and Omri began in the twenty-seventh year of Asa; this division lasted five years, during which Omri had but a share of the kingdom. Tibni dying, Omri came into the possession of the whole kingdom, which he held seven years; this was in the thirty-first year of Asa. Seven years he reigned alone; five years he reigned over part of Israel; twelve years in the whole. The two dates, the twenty-seventh and thirty-first of Asa, answering, the

first to the beginning of the division, the second to the sole reign of Omri.” Jarchi quotes Sedar Olam for this solution.

**Verse 24. *He bought the hill Samaria of Shemer*** This should be read, “He bought the hill of Shomeron from Shomer, and called it Shomeron, (i.e., Little Shomer,) after the name of Shomer, owner of the hill.” At first the kings of Israel dwelt at Shechem, and then at Tirzah; but this place having suffered much in the civil broils, and the place having been burnt down by Zimri, Omri purposed to found a new city, to which he might transfer the seat of government. He fixed on a hill that belonged to a person of the name of Shomer; and bought it from him for two talents of silver, about ú707 3s. 9d. Though this was a large sum in those days, yet we cannot suppose that the hill was very large which was purchased for so little; and probably no other building upon it than Shomer’s house, if indeed he had one there. Shomeron, or, as it is corruptly written, Samaria, is situated in the midst of the tribe of Ephraim, not very far from the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and about midway between Dan and Beer-sheba: thus Samaria became the capital of the ten tribes, the metropolis of the kingdom of Israel, and the residence of its kings. The kings of Israel adorned and fortified it; Ahab built a house of ivory in it, 1 Kings 22:39; the kings of Syria had magazines or storehouses in it, for the purpose of commerce; see 1 Kings 20:34. And it appears to have been a place of considerable importance and great strength.

Samaria endured several sieges; Ben-hadad king of Syria, besieged it twice, 1 Kings 20:1, etc.; and it cost Shalmaneser a siege of three years to reduce it, 2 Kings 17:6, etc. After the death of Alexander the Great, it became the property of the kings of Egypt; but Antiochus the Great took it from the Egyptians; and it continued in the possession of the kings of Syria till the Asmoneans took and razed it to the very foundation. Gabinius, pro-consul of Syria, partially rebuilt it, and called it Gabiniana. Herod the Great restored it to its ancient splendor, and placed in it a colony of six thousand men, and gave it the name of Sebaste, in honor of Augustus. It is now a place of little consequence.

**Verse 25. *Did worse than all-before him*** Omri was, 1. An idolater in principle; 2. An idolater in practice; 3. He led the people to idolatry by precept and example; and, which was that in which he did worse than all



before him, 4. He made statutes in favor of idolatry, and obliged the people by law to commit it. See Micah 6:16, where this seems to be intended: For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab.

**Verse 31. *He took to wife Jezebel*** This was the head and chief of his offending; he took to wife, not only a heathen, but one whose hostility to the true religion was well known, and carried to the utmost extent. 1. She was the idolatrous daughter of an idolatrous king; 2. She practiced it openly; 3. She not only countenanced it in others, but protected it, and gave its partisans honors and rewards; 4. She used every means to persecute the true religion; 5. She was hideously cruel, and put to death the prophets and priests of God; 6. And all this she did with the most zealous perseverance and relentless cruelty.

Notwithstanding Ahab had built a temple, and made an altar for Baal, and set up the worship of Asherah, the Sidonian Venus, which we, 1 Kings 16:33, have transformed into a grove; yet so well known was the hostility of Jezebel to all good, that his marrying her was esteemed the highest pitch of vice, and an act the most provoking to God, and destructive to the prosperity of the kingdom.

**Verse 33. *Ahab made a grove*** אֲשֶׁרָה Asherah, Astarte, or Venus; what the Syriac calls an idol, and the Arabic, a tall tree; probably meaning, by the last, an image of Priapus, the obscene keeper of groves, orchards, and gardens.

**Verse 34. *Did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho*** I wish the reader to refer to my note on Joshua 6:26, for a general view of this subject. I shall add a few observations. Joshua's curse is well known: "Cursed be the man

hundred years before the event; and though it was most circumstantially fulfilled, yet we know not the precise meaning of some of the terms used in the original execration, and in this place, where its fulfillment is mentioned. There are three opinions on the words, lay the foundation in his first-born, and set up the gates in his youngest son.

1. It is thought that when he laid the foundation of the city, his eldest son, the hope of his family, died by the hand and judgment of God, and that all his children died in succession; so that when the doors were ready to be hung, his youngest and last child died, and thus, instead of securing himself a name, his whole family became extinct.

2. These expressions signify only great delay in the building; that he who should undertake it should spend nearly his whole life in it; all the time in which he was capable of procreating children; in a word, that if a man laid the foundation when his first-born came into the world, his youngest and last son should be born before the walls should be in readiness to admit the gates to be set up in them; and that the expression is of the proverbial kind, intimating greatly protracted labor, occasioned by multitudinous hinderances and delays.

3. That he who rebuilt this city should, in laying the foundation, slay or sacrifice his firstborn, in order to consecrate it, and secure the assistance of the objects of his idolatrous worship; and should slay his youngest at the completion of the work, as a gratitude-offering for the assistance received. This latter opinion seems to be countenanced by the Chaldee, which represents Hiel as slaying his first-born Abiram, and his youngest son Segub.

But who was Hiel the Beth-elite? The Chaldee calls him Hiel of Beth-mome, or the Beth-momite; the Vulgate, Hiel of Beth-el; the Septuagint, Hiel the Baithelite; the Syriac represents Ahab as the builder: "Also in his days did Ahab build Jericho, the place of execration;" the Arabic, "Also in his days did Hiel build the house of idols-to wit, Jericho." The MSS. give us no help. None of these versions, the Chaldee excepted, intimates that the children were either slain or died; which circumstance seems to strengthen the opinion, that the passage is to be understood of delays and hinderances. Add to this, Why should the innocent children of Hiel suffer for their father's presumption? And is it likely that, if Hiel lost

his first-born when he laid the foundation, he would have proceeded under this evidence of the Divine displeasure, and at the risk of losing his whole family? Which of these opinions is the right one, or whether any of them be correct, is more than I can pretend to state. A curse seems to rest still upon Jericho: it is not yet blotted out of the map of Palestine, but it is reduced to a miserable village, consisting of about thirty wretched cottages, and the governor's dilapidated castle; nor is there any ruin there to indicate its former splendor.

## CHAPTER 17

*Elijah's message to Ahab concerning the three years' drought, 1. He is commanded to go to the brook Cherith; where he is fed by ravens, 2-7. He afterwards goes to a widow's house at Zarephath, and miraculously multiplies her meal and oil, 8-16. Her son dies, and Elijah restores him to life, 17-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 1. *Elijah the Tishbite*** The history of this great man is introduced very abruptly; his origin is enveloped in perfect obscurity. He is here said to be a Tishbite. Tishbeh, says Calmet, is a city beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead. Who was his father, or from what tribe he sprang, is not intimated; he seems to have been the prophet of Israel peculiarly, as we never find him prophesying in Judah. A number of apocryphal writers have trifled at large about his parentage, miraculous birth, of his continual celibacy, his academy of the prophets, etc., etc., all equally worthy of credit. One opinion, which at first view appears strange, bears more resemblance to truth than any of the above, viz., that he had no earthly parentage known to any man; that he was an angel of God, united for a time to a human body, in order to call men back to perfect purity, both in doctrine and manners, from which they had totally swerved. His Hebrew name, which we have corrupted into Elijah and Elias, is אֱלִיָּהוּ Alihu, or, according to the vowel points, Eliyahu; and signifies he is my God. Does this give countenance to the supposition that this great personage was a manifestation in the flesh of the Supreme Being? He could not be the Messiah; for we find him with Moses on the mount of transfiguration with Christ. The conjecture that he was an angel seems countenanced by the manner of his departure from this world; yet, in James 5:17, he is said to be a man ὁμοιοπαθής, of like passions, or rather with real human propensities: this, however, is irreconcilable with the conjecture.

***There shall not be dew nor rain these years*** In order to remove the abruptness of this address, R. S. Jarchi dreams thus:-“Elijah and Ahab went to comfort Hiel in his grief, concerning his sons. And Ahab said to Elijah, Is it possible that the curse of Joshua, the son of Nun, who was only the servant of Moses, should be fulfilled; and the curse of Moses, our teacher, not be fulfilled; who said, Deuteronomy 11:16, 17: If ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them, then the Lord’s wrath shall be kindled against you; and he will shut up the heaven that there be no rain? Now all the Israelites serve other gods, and yet the rain is not withheld. Then Elijah said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” This same mode of connecting this and the preceding chapter, is followed by the Jerusalem and Babylonish Talmuds, Sedar Olam, Abarbanel, etc.

**Verse 3. *Hide thyself by the brook Cherith*** This brook, and the valley through which it ran, are supposed to have been on the western side of Jordan, and not far from Samaria. Others suppose it to have been on the eastern side, because the prophet is commanded to go eastward, 1 Kings 17:3. It was necessary, after such a declaration to this wicked and idolatrous king, that he should immediately hide himself; as, on the first drought, Ahab would undoubtedly seek his life. But what a proof was this of the power of God, and the vanity of idols! As God’s prophet prayed, so there was rain or drought; and all the gods of Israel could not reverse it! Was not this sufficient to have converted all Israel?

**Verse 4. *I have commanded the ravens to feed thee*** Thou shalt not lack the necessaries of life; thou shalt be supplied by an especial providence. See more on this subject at the end of the chapter. { 1 Kings 17:24 }

**Verse 6. *And the ravens brought him bread and flesh*** The Septuagint, in the Codex Vaticanus, and some ancient fathers, read the passage thus:-**καὶ οἱ κορακεὶς ἔφερον αὐτῷ ἄρτους τὸ πρωί, καὶ κρέα τὸ δειλῆς**, And the crows brought him bread in the morning, and flesh in the evening; but all the other versions agree with the Hebrew text. This is the first account we have of flesh-meat breakfasts and flesh-meat suppers; and as this was the food appointed by the Lord for the sustenance of the prophet, we may naturally conjecture that it was the food of the people at large.

**Verse 7. *The brook dried up*** Because there had been no rain in the land for some time, God having sent this drought as a testimony against the idolatry of the people: see Deuteronomy 11:16, 17.

**Verse 9. *Get thee to Zarephath*** This was a town between Tyre and Sidon, but nearer to the latter, and is therefore called in the text Zarephath which belongeth to Sidon; or, as the Vulgate and other versions express it, Sarepta of the Sidonians. Sarepta is the name by which it goes in the New Testament; but its present name is Sarphan. Mr. Maundrell, who visited it, describes it as consisting of a few houses only on the tops of the mountains; but supposes that it anciently stood in the plain below, where there are still ruins of a considerable extent.

**Verse 12. *A handful of meal in a barrel*** The word כַּד *cad* is to be understood as implying an earthen jar; not a wooden vessel, or barrel of any kind. In the East they preserve their corn and meal in such vessels; without which precaution the insects would destroy them. Travellers in Asiatic countries abound with observations of this kind.

The word cruse, צַפַּחַת *tsappachath*, says Jarchi, signifies what in our tongue is expressed by *bouteille*, a bottle. Jarchi was a French rabbin.

**Verse 13. *But make me thereof a little cake first*** This was certainly putting the widow's faith to an extraordinary trial: to take and give to a stranger, of whom she knew nothing, the small pittance requisite to keep her child from perishing, was too much to be expected.

**Verse 16. *The barrel of meal wasted not*** She continued to take out of her jar and out of her bottle the quantity of meal and oil requisite for the consumption of her household; and without carefully estimating what was left, she went with confidence each time for a supply, and was never disappointed. This miracle was very like that wrought by Jesus at the marriage at Cana in Galilee: as the servants drew the water out of the pots, they found it turned into wine; and thus they continued to draw wine from the water-pots till the guests had been sufficiently supplied.

**Verse 17. *There was no breath left in him*** He ceased to breathe and died.

**Verse 18. *To call my sin to remembrance*** She seems to be now conscious of some secret sin, which she had either forgotten, or too carelessly passed

over; and to punish this she supposes the life of her son was taken away. It is mostly in times of adversity that we duly consider our moral state; outward afflictions often bring deep searchings of heart.

**Verse 21. *Stretched himself upon the child three times*** It is supposed that he did this in order to communicate some natural warmth to the body of the child, in order to dispose it to receive the departed spirit. Elisha, his disciple, did the same in order to restore the dead child of the Shunammite, 2 Kings 4:34. And St. Paul appears to have stretched himself on Eutychus in order to restore him to life, Acts 20:10.

***Let this child's soul come into him again*** Surely this means no more than the breath. Though the word נפש nephesh may sometimes signify the life, yet does not this imply that the spirit must take possession of the body in order to produce and maintain the flame of animal life? The expressions here are singular: Let his soul, נפש nephesh, come into him, על קרבו al kirbo, into the midst of him.

**Verse 22. *And the soul נפש nephesh, of the child came into him again, על קרבו al kirbo, into the midst of him; and he revived, ויה vaiyechi, and he became alive.*** Did he not become alive from the circumstance of the immaterial principle coming again into him?

Although רוח ruach is sometimes put for the breath, yet נפש generally means the immortal spirit, and where it seems to refer to animal life alone, it is only such a life as is the immediate and necessary effect of the presence of the immortal spirit.

The words and mode of expression here appear to me a strong proof, not only of the existence of an immortal and immaterial spirit in man, but also that that spirit can and does exist in a separate state from the body. It is here represented as being in the midst of the child, like a spring in the center of a machine, which gives motion to every part, and without which the whole would stand still.

**Verse 24. *The word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.*** Three grand effects were produced by this temporary affliction: 1. The woman was led to examine her heart, and try her ways; 2. The power of God became highly manifest in the resurrection of the child; 3. She was convinced that

the word of the Lord was truth, and that not one syllable of it could fall to the ground. Through a little suffering all this good was obtained.

THE subject in the fourth verse of this chapter deserves a more particular consideration.

I have commanded the ravens to feed thee. — It is contended that if we consider עֲרָבִים orebim to signify ravens, we shall find any interpretation on this ground to be clogged with difficulties. I need mention but a few. The raven is an unclean bird, And these ye shall have in abomination among the fowls—every raven after his kind; Leviticus 11:13-15; that is, every species of this genus shall be considered by you unclean and abominable. Is it therefore likely that God would employ this most unclean bird to feed his prophet? Besides, where could the ravens get any flesh that was not unclean? Carrion is their food; and would God send any thing of this kind to his prophet? Again: If the flesh was clean which God sent, where could ravens get it? Here must be at least three miracles: one to bring from some table the flesh to the ravens; another, to induce the ravenous bird to give it up; and the third, to conquer its timidity towards man, so that it could come to the prophet without fear. Now, although God might employ a fowl that would naturally strive to prey on the flesh, and oblige it, contrary to its nature, to give it up; yet it is by no means likely that he would employ a bird that his own law had pronounced abominable. Again, he could not have employed this means without working a variety of miracles at the same time, in order to accomplish one simple end; and this is never God's method: his plan is ever to accomplish the greatest purposes by the simplest means.

The original word orebim has been considered by some as meaning merchants, persons occasionally trading through that country, whom God directed, by inspiration, to supply the prophet with food. To get a constant supply from such hands in an extraordinary way was miracle enough; it showed the superintendence of God, and that the hearts of all men are in his hands.

But in answer to this it is said, that the “original word never signifies merchants; and that the learned Bochart has proved this.” I have carefully read over cap. 13, part. ii., lib. 2, of the Hierozoicon of this author, where he discusses this subject; and think that he has never succeeded less than in



his attempt to prove that ravens are meant in this passage. He allows that the Tyrian merchants are described by this periphrasis, **עֲרָבֵי מַעְרָב**, the occupiers of thy merchandise, Ezekiel 27:27; and asserts that **עֲרָבִים** orebim, per se, mercatores nusquam significat, “by itself, never signifies merchants.” Now, with perfect deference to so great an authority, I assert that **עֲרָבֵי** oreby, the contracted form of **עֲרָבִים** orebim, does signify merchants, both in Ezekiel 27:9 and Ezekiel 27:27, and that **מַעְרָב** maarab signifies a place for merchandise, the market-place or bazaar, in Ezekiel 27:9, 13, 17, 19; as also the goods sold in such places, Ezekiel 27:33; and therefore that **עֲרָבִים** orebim for aught proved to the contrary, signify merchants in the text.

As to Bochart’s objection, that, the prophet being ordered to go to the brook Cherith, that he might lie hid, and the place of his retreat not be known, if any traders or merchants supplied his wants, they would most likely discover where he was, etc., I think there is no weight in it; for the men might be as well bound by the secret inspiration of God not to discover the place of his retreat, as they were to supply his wants; besides, they might have been of the number of those seven thousand men who had not bowed their knees to the image of Baal, and consequently would not inform Ahab and Jezebel of their prophet’s hiding place.

Some have supposed that the original means Arabians; but Bochart contends that there were no Arabians in that district: this is certainly more than he or any other man can prove. Colonies of Arabs, and hordes and families of the same people, have been widely scattered over different places for the purpose of temporal sojournment and trade; for they were a wandering people, and often to be found in different districts remote enough from the place of their birth. But, letting this pass merely for what it is worth, and feeling as I do the weight of the objections that may be brought against the supposition of ravens being the agents employed to feed the prophet, I would observe that there was a town or city of the name of Orbo, that was not far from the place where Elijah was commanded to hide himself. In Bereshith Rabba, a rabbinical comment on Genesis, we have these words **בְּתַחֲוֹם בֵּית־שֵׁאן וְשֵׁמֹהוּ עֲרָבוֹ עִיר הִיא** ir hi bithchom Beithshean, veshemo Orbo; “There is a town in the vicinity of Beth-shan, (Scythopolis,) and its name is Orbo.” We may add to this from

St. Jerome, *Orbim, accolae villae in finibus Arabum, Eliae dederunt alimenta*; “The Orbim, inhabitants of a town in the confines of the Arabs, gave nourishment to Elijah.” Now, I consider Jerome’s testimony to be of great worth, because he spent several years in the holy land, that he might acquire the most correct notion possible of the language and geography of the country, as well as of the customs and habits of the people, in order to his translating the sacred writings, and explaining them. Had there not been such a place in his time, he could not have written as above: and although in this place the common printed editions of the Vulgate have *corvi*, “crows or ravens;” yet in 2 Chronicles 21:16, St. Jerome translates the same word עֲרַבִּים, “the Arabians;” and the same in Nehemiah 4:7; it is therefore most likely that the inhabitants of Oreb or Orbo, as mentioned above, furnished the aliment by which the prophet was sustained; and that they did this being specially moved thereto by the Spirit of the Lord. Add to all these testimonies that of the Arabic version, which considers the words as meaning a people, (Arabic) Orabim, and not ravens or fowls of any kind. In such a case this version is high authority.

It is contended that those who think the miracle is lost if the ravens be not admitted, are bound to show, 1. With what propriety the raven, an unclean animal, could be employed? 2. Why the dove, or some such clean creature, was not preferred? 3. How the ravens could get properly dressed flesh to bring to the prophet? 4. From whose table it was taken; and by what means? 5. Whether it be consistent with the wisdom of God, and his general conduct, to work a tissue of miracles where one was sufficient? 6. And whether it be not best, in all cases of this kind, to adopt that mode of interpretation which is most simple; the wisdom, goodness, and providence of God being as equally apparent as in those cases where a multitude of miracles are resorted to in order to solve difficulties?

## CHAPTER 18

*Elijah is commanded by the Lord to show himself to Ahab, 1, 2. Ahab, and Obadiah his steward, search the land to find provender for the cattle, 3-6. Obadiah meets Elijah, who commands him to inform Ahab that he is ready to present himself before him, 7-15. Elijah and Ahab meet, 16-18. Elijah proposes that the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal should be gathered together at Mount Carmel; that they should offer a sacrifice to their god, and he to Jehovah; and the God who should send down fire to consume the sacrifice should be acknowledged as the true God, 19-24. The proposal is accepted, and the priests of Baal call in vain upon their god through the whole day, 25-29. Elijah offers his sacrifice, prays to Gods and fire comes down from heaven and consumes it; whereupon the people acknowledge Jehovah to be the true God, and slay all the prophets of Baal, 30-40. Elijah promises Ahab that there shall be immediate rain; it comes accordingly, and Ahab and Elijah come to Jezreel, 41-46.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1. *After many days-in the third year*** We learn from our Lord, Luke 4:25, that the drought which brought on the famine in Israel lasted three years and six months. St. James, James 5:17, gives it the same duration. Probably Elijah spent six months at the brook Cherith, and three years with the widow at Sarepta.

***I will send rain upon the earth.*** The word **האדמה** haadamah should be translated the ground or the land, as it is probable that this drought did not extend beyond the land of Judea.

**Verse 3. *Obadiah feared the Lord greatly*** He was a sincere and zealous worshipper of the true God, and his conduct towards the persecuted prophets was the full proof both of his piety and humanity.

**Verse 4. *Fed them with bread and water.*** By these are signified the necessaries of life, of whatsoever kind.

**Verse 5. *Unto all fountains of water*** All marshy or well-watered districts, where grass was most likely to be preserved.

**Verse 10. *There is no nation or kingdom*** He had sent through all his own states and to the neighboring governments to find out the prophet, as he knew, from his own declaration, that both rain and drought were to be the effect of his prayers. Had he found him, he no doubt intended to oblige him to procure rain, or punish him for having brought on this drought.

***He took an oath*** Ahab must have had considerable power and authority among the neighboring nations to require and exact this, and Elijah must have kept himself very secret to have shunned such an extensive and minute search.

**Verse 12. *The Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee*** Obadiah supposed that the Spirit of the Lord had carried him to some strange country during the three years and a half of the drought; and as he had reason to think that Ahab would slay Elijah if he found him, and that the God of the prophet would not suffer his servant to fall into such murderous hands, he took for granted that as soon as he should come into danger, so soon would the Spirit of the Lord carry him away, or direct him to some hiding place.

**Verse 13. *When Jezebel slew the prophets*** This persecution was probably during the dearth, for as this bad woman would attribute the public calamity to Elijah, not being able to find him, she would naturally wreak her vengeance on the prophets of Jehovah who were within her reach.

**Verse 18. *I have not troubled Israel*** Here the cause of the dearth is placed on its true ground: the king and the people had forsaken the true God, and God shut up the heavens that there was no rain. Elijah was only the minister whom God used to dispense this judgment.

**Verse 19. *Gather to me all Israel*** The heads of tribes and families; the rulers of the people.

***The prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty-the prophets of the groves four hundred*** The king and queen had different religious establishments; the king and his servants worshipped Baal, the supreme lord and master of the world, the sun. For this establishment four hundred and fifty priests

were maintained. The queen and her women worshipped אֲשֵׁרָה Asherah, Astarte, or Venus; and for this establishment four hundred priests were maintained. These latter were in high honor; they ate at Jezebel's table; they made a part of her household. It appears that those eight hundred and fifty priests were the domestic chaplains of the king and queen, and probably not all the priests that belonged to the rites of Baal and Asherah in the land; and yet from the following verse we learn that Ahab had sent to all the children of Israel to collect these prophets; but Jezebel had certainly four hundred of them in her own house who were not at the assembly mentioned here. Those of Baal might have a more extensive jurisdiction than those of Asherah, the latter being constantly resident in Samaria.

**Verse 21. *How long halt ye between two opinions?*** Literally, "How long hop ye about upon two boughs?" This is a metaphor taken from birds hopping about from bough to bough, not knowing on which to settle. Perhaps the idea of limping through lameness should not be overlooked. They were halt, they could not walk uprightly; they dreaded Jehovah, and therefore could not totally abandon him; they feared the king and queen, and therefore thought they must embrace the religion of the state. Their conscience forbade them to do the former; their fear of man persuaded them to do the latter, but in neither were they heartily engaged; and at this juncture their minds seemed in equipoise, and they were waiting for a favorable opportunity to make their decision. Such an opportunity now, through the mercy of God, presented itself.

**Verse 22. *I only, remain a prophet of the Lord*** That is, I am the only prophet of God present, and can have but the influence of an individual; while the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men! It appears that the queen's prophets, amounting to four hundred, were not at this great assembly; and these are they whom we meet with 1 Kings 22:6, and whom the king consulted relative to the battle at Ramoth-gilead.

**Verse 24. *The God that answereth by fire*** Elijah gave them every advantage when he granted that the God who answered by fire should be acknowledged as the true God; for as the Baal who was worshipped here was incontestably Apollo, or the sun, he was therefore the god of fire, and had only to work in his own element.

**Verse 25. *For ye are many*** And therefore shall have the preference, and the advantage of being first in your application to the deity.

**Verse 26. *From morning even until noon*** It seems that the priests of Baal employed the whole day in their desperate rites. The time is divided into two periods: 1. From morning until noon; this was employed in preparing and offering the sacrifice, and in earnest supplication for the celestial fire. Still there was no answer, and at noon Elijah began to mock and ridicule them, and this excited them to commence anew. And, 2. They continued from noon till the time of offering the evening sacrifice, dancing up and down, cutting themselves with knives, mingling their own blood with their sacrifice, praying, supplicating, and acting in the most frantic manner.

***And they leaped upon the altar*** Perhaps it will be more correct to read with the margin, they leaped up and down at the altar; they danced round it with strange and hideous cries and gesticulations, tossing their heads to and fro, with a great variety of bodily contortions.

A heathen priest, a high priest of Budhoo, has been just showing me the manner in which they dance and jump up and down, and from side to side, twisting their bodies in all manner of ways, when making their offerings to their demon gods; a person all the while beating furiously on a tom-tom, or drum, to excite and sustain those frantic attitudes; at the same time imploring the succor of their god, frequently in some such language as this: "O loving brother devil, hear me, and receive my offering!" To perform these sacrificial attitudes they have persons who are taught to practice them from their earliest years, according to directions laid down in religious books; and to make the joints and body pliant, much anointing of the parts and mechanical management are used; and they have masters, whose business it is to teach these attitudes and contortions according to the rules laid down in those books. It seems therefore that this was a very general practice of idolatry, as indeed are the others mentioned in this chapter.

**Verse 27. *At noon-Elijah mocked them*** Had not Elijah been conscious of the Divine protection, he certainly would not have used such freedom of speech while encompassed by his enemies.

**Cry aloud** Make a great noise; oblige him by your vociferations to attend to your suit.

**For he is a god** כִּי אֱלֹהִים הוּא ki Elohim hu, he is the supreme God, you worship him as such, he must needs be such, and no doubt jealous of his own honor and the credit of his votaries! A strong irony.

**He is talking** He may be giving audience to some others; let him know that he has other worshippers, and must not give too much of his attention to one. Perhaps the word שִׂיחַ siach should be interpreted as in the margin, he meditateth; he is in a profound revery; he is making some god-like projects; he is considering how he may best keep up his credit in the nation. Shout! let him know that all is now at stake.

**He is pursuing** He may be taking his pleasure in hunting, and may continue to pursue the game in heaven, till he have lost all his credit and reverence on earth.

The original words, שִׁיג לוֹ sig lo, are variously translated; He is in a hotel, in diversorio, VULGATE. Perhaps he is delivering oracles, μὴ ποτε χρηματιζέι αὐτος, SEPTUAGINT. Or, he is on some special business. Therefore, cry aloud!

**He is in a journey** He has left his audience chamber, and is making some excursions; call aloud to bring him back, as his all is at stake.

**Peradventure he sleepeth** Rab. S. Jarchi gives this the most degrading meaning; I will give it in Latin, because it is too coarse to be put in English; Fortassis ad locum secretum abiit, ut ventrem ibi exomeret; “Perhaps he is gone to the —.” This certainly reduces Baal to the lowest degree of contempt, and with it the ridicule and sarcasm are complete.

Among Asiatic idolaters their gods have different functions to fulfill, and require sleep and rest. Vishnoo sleeps four months in the year. Budhoo is represented in his temple as sleep, though his eyes are open. Vayoo manages the winds; Varoona, the waters; Indra, the clouds, etc.; and according to many fables in the Pooranas, the gods are often out on journeys, expeditions, etc.

**Verse 28. They cried aloud** The poor fools acted as they were bidden.

***And cut themselves after their manner*** This was done according to the rites of that barbarous religion; if the blood of the bullock would not move him they thought their own blood might; and with it they smeared themselves and their sacrifice. This was not only the custom of the idolatrous Israelites, but of the Syrians, Persians, Greeks, Indians, and in short of all the heathen world.

**Verse 29. *They prophesied*** They made incessant prayer and supplication; a farther proof that to pray or supplicate is the proper ideal meaning of the word נָבֵא naba, which we constantly translate to prophesy, when even all the circumstances of the time and place are against such a meaning. See what is said on the case of Saul among the prophets, in the note on 1 Samuel 10:5.

**Verse 30. *He repaired the altar of the Lord*** There had been an altar of Jehovah in that place, called, even among the heathens, the altar of Carmel, probably built in the time of the judges, or, as the rabbins imagine, by Saul. Tacitus and Suetonius mention an altar on Mount Carmel, which Vespasian went to consult; there was no temple nor statue, but simply an altar that was respectable for its antiquity. “Est Judaeam inter Syriamque Carmelus; ita vocant montem Deumque: nec simulachrum Deo, aut templum situm tradidere majores: aram tantum, et reverentiam.” -TACIT. Hist. lib. ii., c. 78. A priest named Basilides officiated at that altar, and assured Vespasian that all his projects would be crowned with success.

Suetonius speaks to this purpose: “Apud Judaeam Carmeli Dei oraculum consulentem ita confirmavere sortes, ut quicquid cogitaret volveretque animo quamlibet magnum, id esse proventurum pollicerentur.” Suet. in Vespas. cap. 5. The mount, the absence of a temple, no image, but a simple altar, very ancient, and which was held in reverence on account of the true answers which had been given there, prove that this was originally the altar of Jehovah: though in the time of Vespasian it seems to have been occupied by a heathen priest, and devoted to lying vanities.

**Verse 31. *Took twelve stones*** He did this to show that all the twelve tribes of Israel should be joined in the worship of Jehovah.



**Verse 32. *He made a trench*** This was to detain the water that might fall down from the altar when the barrels should be poured upon it, 1 Kings 18:35.

**Verse 33. *Fill four barrels*** This was done to prevent any kind of suspicion that there was fire concealed under the altar. An ancient writer under the name of Chrysostom, quoted by Calmet, says that he had seen under the altars of the heathens, holes dug in the earth with funnels proceeding from them, and communicating with openings on the tops of the altars. In the former the priests concealed fire, which, communicating through the funnels with the holes, set fire to the wood and consumed the sacrifice; and thus the simple people were led to believe that the sacrifice was consumed by a miraculous fire. Elijah showed that no such knavery could be practiced in the present case. Had there been a concealed fire under the altar, as in the case mentioned above, the water that was thrown on the altar must have extinguished it most effectually. This very precaution has for ever put this miracle beyond the reach of suspicion.

**Verse 36. *Lord God of Abraham*** He thus addressed the Supreme Being, that they might know when the answer was given, that it was the same God whom the patriarchs and their fathers worshipped, and thus have their hearts turned back again to the true religion of their ancestors.

**Verse 38. *Then the fire of the Lord fell*** It did not burst out from the altar; this might still, notwithstanding the water, have afforded some ground for suspicion that fire had been concealed, after the manner of the heathens, under the altar.

Pindar's account of the Rhodians' settling is the isle of Rhodes, and their first sacrifice there, bears a near affinity to the account here given: the shower of gold descending on the sacrifice offered up without fire, to show the approbation of their god, is little more than a poetic account of the above transactions.

καιτοι γαρ αιθουσας εχοντες  
 σπερμ' ανεβαν φλογος ου τευξαν δ'  
 απυροις ιεροις αλσος εν ακροπολει· κεινοισι μεν ξαν  
 θαν αγαγων νεφελαι· πολυν υσε χρυσον

*The Rhodians, mindful of their sire's behest,  
 Straight in the citadel an altar reared;  
 But with imperfect rites the Power addressed,  
 And without fire their sacrifice prepared;  
 Yet Jove, approving, o'er the assembly spread  
 A yellow cloud, that dropped with golden dews.*

WEST.

**Consumed the burnt-sacrifice** The process of this consumption is very remarkable, and all calculated to remove the possibility of a suspicion that there was any concealed fire. 1. The fire came down from heaven. 2. The pieces of the sacrifice were first consumed. 3. The wood next, to show that it was not even by means of the wood that the flesh was burned. 4. The twelve stones were also consumed, to show that it was no common fire, but one whose agency nothing could resist. 5. The dust, the earth of which the altar was constructed, was burned up. 6. The water that was in the trench was, by the action of this fire, entirely evaporated. 7. The action of this fire was in every case downward, contrary to the nature of all earthly and material fire. Nothing can be more simple and artless than this description, yet how amazingly full and satisfactory is the whole account!

**Verse 39. Fell on their faces** Struck with awe and reverence at the sight of this incontestable miracle.

**And they said** We should translate the words thus: JEHOVAH, He is the God! JEHOVAH, He is the God! Baal is not the God; Jehovah alone is the God of Israel.

As our term Lord is very equivocal, we should every where insert the original word יהוה, which we should write Yeve or Yeheveh, or Yahvah or Yehueh, or, according to the points, Yehovah.

**Verse 40. Let not one of them escape.** They had committed the highest crime against the state and the people by introducing idolatry, and bringing down God's judgments upon the land; therefore their lives were forfeited to that law which had ordered every idolater to be slain. It seems also that Ahab, who was present, consented to this act of impartial justice.

**Verse 41. *Get thee up, eat and drink*** It appears most evidently that Ahab and the prophet were now on good terms, and this is a farther evidence that the slaying of the false prophets was by the king's consent.

**Verse 42. *Put his face between his knees*** He kneeled down, and then bowed his head to the earth, so that, while his face was between his knees, his forehead touched the ground.

**Verse 43. *Look toward the sea.*** From the top of Mount Carmel the Mediterranean Sea was full in view.

**Verse 44. *There ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand.***  
 כֶּכַּף אִישׁ kechaph ish, like the hollow of a man's hand. In the form of the hand bent, the concave side downmost. I have witnessed a resemblance of this kind at sea previously to a violent storm, a little cloud the size of a man's hand first appearing, and this increasing in size and density every moment, till at last it covered the whole heavens, and then burst forth with incredible fury.

Mr. Bruce mentions a similar appearance in Abyssinia:—"Every morning, in Abyssinia, is clear, and the sun shines. About nine a small cloud, not above four hundred feet broad, appears in the east, whirling violently round, as if upon an axis; but arrived near the zenith, it first abates its motion, then loses its form, and extends itself greatly, and seems to call up vapours from all opposite quarters. These clouds, having attained nearly the same height, rush against each other with great violence, and put me always in mind of Elijah foretelling rain on Mount Carmel." -Travels, vol. v., page 336, edit. 1806.

**Verse 46. *Ran before Ahab*** Many think that Elijah ran before the king in order to do him honor; and much learned labor has been spent on this passage in order to show that Elijah had put himself at the head of a company of chanters who ran before the king reciting his praises, or the praises of God; a custom which still exists in Arabian countries! I believe all these entirely mistake the writer's meaning: Ahab yoked his chariot, and made all speed to Jezreel. The hand of the Lord, or, as the Targum says, the spirit of strength, came upon Elijah, and he girded up his loins, that is, tucked up his long garments in his girdle, and ran; and notwithstanding the advantage the king had by means of his chariot, the

prophet reached Jezreel before him. There is no intimation here that he ran before the horses' heads. All this was intended to show that he was under the peculiar influence and inspiration of the Almighty, that the king might respect and fear him, and not do or permit to be done to him any kind of outrage.

## CHAPTER 19

*Ahab tells Jezebel what Elijah had done; she is enraged, and threatens to take away his life, 1, 2. He leaves Jezreel, and comes to Beer-sheba, and thence to the wilderness, where he is fed and encouraged by an angel, 3-9. His complaint and the vision by which God instructs him, 10-14. He is sent to Damascus, in order to anoint Hazael king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel, 15-18. He meets with Elisha, who becomes his servant, 19-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 1. *Ahab told Jezebel*** Probably with no evil design against Elijah.

**Verse 2. *So let the gods do*** If I do not slay thee, let the gods slay me with the most ignominious death.

**Verse 3. *He arose, and went for his life*** He saw it was best to give place to this storm, and go to a place of safety. He probably thought that the miracle at Carmel would have been the means of effecting the conversion of the whole court and of the country, but, finding himself mistaken, he is greatly discouraged.

***To Beer-sheba*** This being at the most southern extremity of the promised land, and under the jurisdiction of the king of Judah, he might suppose himself in a place of safety.

***Left his servant there.*** Being alone, he would be the more unlikely to be discovered; besides, he did not wish to risk the life of his servant.

**Verse 4. *A day's journey into the wilderness*** Probably in his way to Mount Horeb. See 1 Kings 19:8.

***Juniper tree*** A tree that afforded him a shade from the scorching sun.

***It is enough*** I have lived long enough! I can do no more good among this people; let me now end my days.

**Verse 5. *As he lay and slept*** Excessive anguish of mind frequently induces sleep, as well as great fatigue of body.

***An angel touched him*** He needed refreshment, and God sent an angel to bring him what was necessary.

**Verse 6. *A cake baken on the coals*** All this seems to have been supernaturally provided.

**Verse 7. *The journey is too great for thee.*** From Beer-sheba to Horeb was about one hundred and fifty miles.

**Verse 8. *Forty days and forty nights*** So he fasted just the same time as Moses did at Horeb, and as Christ did in the wilderness.

**Verse 9. *He came thither unto a cave*** Conjectured by some to be the same cave in which God put Moses that he might give him a glimpse of his glory. See Exodus 33:22.

***What doest thou here, Elijah?*** Is this a reproach for having fled from the face of Jezebel, through what some call unbelieving fears, that God would abandon him to her rage?

**Verse 10. *I have been very jealous for the Lord*** The picture which he draws here of apostate Israel is very affecting:—

1. ***They have forsaken thy covenant*** They have now cleaved to and worshipped other gods.

2. ***Thrown down thine altars*** Endeavoured, as much as they possibly could, to abolish thy worship, and destroy its remembrance from the land.

3. ***And slain thy prophets*** That there might be none to reprove their iniquity, or teach the truth; so that the restoration of the true worship might be impossible.

4. ***I only, am left*** They have succeeded in destroying all the rest of the prophets, and they are determined not to rest till they slay me.

**Verse 11. *Stand upon the mount before the Lord.*** God was now treating Elijah nearly in the same way that he treated Moses; and it is not unlikely

that Elijah was now standing on the same place where Moses stood, when God revealed himself to him in the giving of the law. See Exodus 19:9, 16.

***The Lord passed by*** It appears that the passing by of the Lord occasioned the strong wind, the earthquake, and the fire; but in none of these was God to make a discovery of himself unto the prophet; yet these, in some sort, prepared his way, and prepared Elijah to hear the still small voice. The apparatus, indicating the presence of the Divine Majesty, is nearly the same as that employed to minister the law to Moses; and many have supposed that God intended these things to be understood thus: that God intended to display himself to mankind not in judgment, but in mercy; and that as the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, were only the forerunners of the still small voice, which proclaimed the benignity of the Father of spirits; so the law, and all its terrors, were only intended to introduce that mild spirit of the Gospel of Jesus, proclaiming glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will unto men. Others think that all this was merely natural; and that a real earthquake, and its accompaniments, are described. 1. Previously to earthquakes the atmosphere becomes greatly disturbed, mighty winds and tempests taking place. 2. This is followed by the actual agitation of the earth. 3. In this agitation fire frequently escapes, or a burning lava is poured out, often accompanied with thunder and lightning. 4. After these the air becomes serene, the thunder ceases to roll, the forked lightnings no longer play, and nothing remains but a gentle breeze. However correct all this may be, it seems most probably evident that what took place at this time was out of the ordinary course of nature; and although the things, as mentioned here, may often be the accompaniments of an earthquake that has nothing supernatural in it; yet here, though every thing is produced in its natural order, yet the exciting cause of the whole is supernatural. Thus the Chaldee understands the whole passage: "And behold the Lord was revealed; and before him was a host of the angels of the wind, tearing the mountains, and breaking the rocks before the Lord, but the Majesty (Shechinah) of the Lord was not in the host of the angels of the wind. And after the host of the angels of the wind, there was a host of the angels of commotion; but the Majesty of the Lord was not in the host of the angels of commotion. And after the host of the angels of commotion, a fire; but the Majesty of the Lord was not in the host of the angels of fire. And after the host of the angels of fire, a voice

singing in silence,” etc.; that is, a sound with which no other sound was mingled. Perhaps the whole of this is intended to give an emblematical representation of the various displays of Divine providence and grace.

**Verse 13. *Wrapped his face in his mantle*** This he did to signify his respect; so Moses hid his face, for he dared not to look upon God Exodus 3:6. Covering the face was a token of respect among the Asiatics, as uncovering the head is among the Europeans.

**Verse 15. *To the wilderness of Damascus*** He does not desire him to take a road by which he might be likely to meet Jezebel, or any other of his enemies.

***Anoint Hazael*** For what reason the Lord was about to make all these revolutions, we are told in 1 Kings 19:17. God was about to bring his judgments upon the land, and especially on the house of Ahab. This he exterminated by means of Jehu; and Jehu himself was a scourge of the Lord to the people. Hazael also grievously afflicted Israel; see the accomplishment of these purposes, 2 Kings 8, and 9.

**Verse 16. *Elisha-shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.*** Jarchi gives a strange turn to these words: “Thy prophecy (or execution of the prophetic office) does not please me, because thou art the constant accuser of my children.” With all their abominations, this rabbin would have us to believe that those vile idolaters and murderers were still the beloved children of God! And why? Because God had made a covenant with their fathers; therefore said the ancient as well as the modern siren song: “Once in the covenant, always in the covenant; once a son, and a son for ever.” And yet we have here the testimony of God’s own prophet, and the testimony of their history, that they had forsaken the covenant, and consequently renounced all their interest in it.

**Verse 17. *Shall Elisha slay.*** We do not find that Elisha either used the sword, or commissioned it to be used, though he delivered solemn prophecies against this disobedient people: and this is probably the sense in which this should be understood, as Elisha was prophet before Hazael was king, and Hazael was king before Jehu; and the heavy famine which he brought on the land took place before the reign either of Jehu or Hazael. The meaning of the prophecy may be this: Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, shall



be the ministers of my vengeance against this disobedient and rebellious people. The order of time, here, is not to be regarded.

**Verse 18. *Seven thousand in Israel*** That is, many thousands; for seven is a number of perfection, as we have often seen: so, The barren has borne seven-has had a numerous off-spring; Gold seven times purified-purified till all the dross is perfectly separated from it. The court and multitudes of the people had gone after Baal; but perhaps the majority of the common people still worshipped in secret the God of their fathers.

***Every mouth which hath not kissed him.*** Idolaters often kissed their hand in honor of their idols; and hence the origin of adoration-bringing the hand to the mouth after touching the idol, if it were within reach; and if not, kissing the right hand in token of respect and subjection. The word is compounded of ad, to, and os, oris, the mouth. *Dextera manu deum contingentes, ori admovebant*: “Touching the god with their right hand, they applied it to their mouth.” So kissing the hand, and adoration, mean the same thing—thus Pliny, *Inter adorandum, dexteram ad osculum referimus, totum corpus circumagimus*: *Nat. Hist. lib. xxviii., cap. 2.* — “In the act of adoration we kiss the right hand, and turn about the whole body.” Cicero mentions a statue of Hercules, the chin and lips of which were considerably worn by the frequent kissing of his worshippers: *Ut rictus ejus, et mentum paulo sit attritius, quod in precibus et gratulationibus, non solum id venerari, sed etiam osculari solent.* — *Orat. in VERREM.*

I have seen several instances of this, especially in the paintings of old saints: the lips and mouth of beautiful paintings literally worn away by the unmerciful osculations of devotees.

**Verse 19. *Twelve yoke of oxen*** Elisha must have had a considerable estate, when he kept twelve yoke of oxen to till the ground. If, therefore, he obeyed the prophetic call, he did it to considerable secular loss.

***He with the twelfth*** Every owner of an inheritance among the Hebrews, and indeed among the ancients in general, was a principal agent in its cultivation.

***Cast his mantle upon him*** Either this was a ceremony used in a call to the prophetic office, or it indicated that he was called to be the servant of the

prophet. The mantle, or pallium, was the peculiar garb of the prophet, as we may learn from Zechariah 13:4; and this was probably made of skin dressed with the hair on. See also 2 Kings 1:8. It is likely, therefore, that Elijah threw his mantle on Elisha to signify to him that he was called to the prophetic office. See more on this subject below.

**Verse 20. *Let me-kiss my father and my mother*** Elisha fully understood that he was called by this ceremony to the prophetic office: and it is evident that he conferred not with flesh and blood, but resolved, immediately resolved, to obey; only he wished to bid farewell to his relatives. See below.

***What have I done to thee?*** Thy call is not from me, but from God: to him, not to me, art thou accountable for thy use or abuse of it.

**Verse 21. *He returned back*** He went home to his house; probably he yet lived with his parents, for it appears he was a single man: and he slew a yoke of the oxen—he made a feast for his household, having boiled the flesh of the oxen with his agricultural implements, probably in token that he had abandoned secular life: then, having bidden them an affectionate farewell, he arose, went after Elijah, who probably still awaited his coming in the field or its vicinity, and ministered unto him.

ON the call of Elisha, I may make a few remarks.

1. Elijah is commanded, 1 Kings 19:16, to anoint Elisha prophet in his room. Though it is generally believed that kings, priests, and prophets, were inaugurated into their respective offices by the right of unction, and this I have elsewhere supposed; yet this is the only instance on record where a prophet is commanded to be anointed; and even this case is problematical, for it does not appear that Elijah did anoint Elisha. Nothing is mentioned in his call to the prophetic office, but the casting the mantle of Elijah upon him; wherefore it is probable that the word anoint, here signifies no more than the call to the office, accompanied by the simple rite of having the prophet's mantle thrown over his shoulders.

2. A call to the ministerial office, though it completely sever from all secular occupations, yet never supersedes the duties of filial affection. Though Elisha must leave his oxen, and become a prophet to Israel: yet he

may first go home, eat and drink with his parents and relatives, and bid them an affectionate farewell.

3. We do not find any attempt on the part of his parents to hinder him from obeying the Divine call: they had too much respect for the authority of God, and they left their son to the dictates of his conscience. Wo to those parents who strive, for filthy lucre's sake, to prevent their sons from embracing a call to preach Jesus to their perishing countrymen, or to the heathen, because they see that the life of a true evangelist is a life of comparative poverty, and they had rather he should gain money than save souls.

4. The cloak, we have already observed, was the prophet's peculiar habit; it was probably in imitation of this that the Greek philosophers wore a sort of mantle, that distinguished them from the common people; and by which they were at once as easily known as certain academical characters are by their gowns and square caps. The pallium was as common among the Greeks as the toga was among the Romans. Each of these was so peculiar to those nations, that Palliatus is used to signify a Greek, as Togatus is to signify a Roman.

5. Was it from this act of Elijah, conveying the prophetic office and its authority to Elisha by throwing his mantle upon him, that the popes of Rome borrowed the ceremony of collating an archbishop to the spiritualities and temporalities of his see, and investing him with plenary sacerdotal authority, by sending him what is well known in ecclesiastical history by the name pallium, pall, or cloak? I think this is likely; for as we learn from Zechariah 13:4, and 2 Kings 1:8, that this mantle was a rough or hairy garment, so we learn from Durandus that the pallium or pall was made of white wool, after the following manner:—

The nuns of St. Agnes, annually on the festival of their patroness, offer two white lambs on the altar of their church, during the time they sing *Agnus Dei*, in a solemn mass; which lambs are afterwards taken by two of the canons of the Lateran church, and by them given to the pope's sub-deacons, who send them to pasture till shearing time; and then they are shorn, and the pall is made of their wool, mixed with other white wool. The pall is then carried to the Lateran church, and there placed on the high altar by the deacons, on the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul; and, after a

usual watching or vigil, it is carried away in the night, and delivered to the sub-deacons, who lay it up safely. Now, because it was taken from the body of St. Peter, it signifies the plenitude of ecclesiastical power: and, therefore, the popes assume it as their prerogative, being the professed successors of this apostle, to invest other prelates with it. This was at first confined to Rome, but afterwards it was sent to popish prelates in different parts of the world.

6. It seems, from the place in Zechariah, quoted above, that this rough cloak or garment became the covering of hypocrites and deceivers; and that persons assumed the prophetic dress without the prophetic call, and God threatens to unmask them. We know that this became general in the popish Church in the beginning of the 16th century; and God stripped those false prophets of their false and wicked pretensions, and exposed them to the people. Many of them profited by this exposure, and became reformed; and the whole community became at least more cautious. The Romish Church should be thankful to the Reformation for the moral purity which is now found in it; for, had not its vices, and usurpations, and super-scandalous sales of indulgences, been thus checked, the whole fabric had by this time been probably dissolved. Should it carry its reformation still farther, it would have a more legitimate pretension to the title of apostolic. Let them compare their ritual with the Bible and common sense, and they will find cause to lop many cumbrous and rotten branches from a good tree.

## CHAPTER 20

*Ben-hadad, king of Syria, and thirty-two kings, besiege Samaria, 1. He sends an insulting message to Ahab; and insists on pillaging the whole city, 2-7. The elders of Israel counsel the king not to submit to such shameful conditions, 8. He sends a refusal to Ben-hadad; who, being enraged, vows revenge, 9-12. A prophet comes to Ahab, and promises him victory, and gives him directions how he should order the battle, 13-19. The Syrians are discomfited, and Ben-hadad scarcely escapes, 20, 21. The prophet warns Ahab to be on his guard, for the Syrians would return next year, 22. The counsellors of the king of Syria instruct him how he may successfully invade Israel, 23-25. He leads an immense army to Aphek, to fight with Ahab, 26, 27. A man of God encourages Ahab, who attacks the Syrians, and kills one hundred thousand of them, 28, 29. They retreat to Aphek, where twenty-seven thousand of them are slain by a casualty, 30. Ben-hadad and his courtiers, being closely besieged in Aphek, and unable to escape, surrender themselves with sackcloth on their loins, and halters on their heads; the king of Israel receives them in a friendly manner, and makes a covenant with Ben-hadad, 31-34. A prophet, by a symbolical action, shows him the impolicy of his conduct in permitting Ben-hadad to escape, and predicts his death and the slaughter of Israel, 35-43.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 1. *Ben-hadad*** Several MSS., and some early printed editions, have Ben-hadar, or the son of Hadar, as the Septuagint. He is supposed to be the same whom Asa stirred up against the king of Israel, 1 Kings 15:18; or, as others, his son or grandson.

***Thirty and two kings*** Tributary chieftains of Syria and the adjacent countries. In former times every town and city had its independent chieftain. Both the Septuagint and Josephus place this war after the history of Naboth.

**Verse 4. *I am thine , and all that I have.*** He probably hoped by this humiliation to soften this barbarous king, and perhaps to get better conditions.

**Verse 6. *Whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes*** It is not easy to discern in what this second requisition differed from the first; for surely his silver, gold, wives, and children, were among his most pleasant or desirable things. Jarchi supposes that it was the book of the law of the Lord which Ben-hadad meant, and of which he intended to deprive Israel. It is however evident that Ben-hadad meant to sack the whole city, and after having taken the royal treasures and the wives and children of the king, to deliver up the whole to be pillaged by his soldiers.

**Verse 8. *Hearken not unto him*** The elders had every thing at stake, and they chose rather to make a desperate defense than tamely to yield to such degrading and ruinous conditions.

**Verse 10. *If the dust of Samaria shall suffice*** This is variously understood. Jonathan translates thus: “If the dust of Shomeron shall be sufficient for the soles of the feet of the people that shall accompany me;” i.e., I shall bring such an army that there will scarcely be room for them to stand in Samaria and its vicinity.

**Verse 11. *Let not him that girdeth on*** This was no doubt a proverbial mode of expression. Jonathan translates, “Tell him, Let not him who girds himself and goes down to the battle, boast as he who has conquered and returned from it.”

**Verse 12. *In the pavilions*** This word comes from papilio, a butterfly, because tents, when pitched or spread out, resembled such animals; partly because of the mode of their expansion, and partly because of the manner in which they were painted.

***Set yourselves in array.*** The original word, שִׁמּוּ simu, which we translate by this long periphrasis, is probably a military term for Begin the attack, Invest the city, Every man to his post, or some such like expression.

**Verse 13. *There came a prophet*** Who this was we cannot tell; Jarchi says it was Micaiah, son of Imlah. It is strange that on such an occasion we hear

nothing of Elijah or Elisha. Is it not possible that this was one of them disguised?

**Verse 14. *By the young men of the princes of the provinces.*** These were probably some chosen persons out of the militia of different districts, raised by the princes of the provinces; the same as we would call lord-lieutenants of counties.

**Verse 15. *Two hundred and thirty-two*** These were probably the king's life or body guards; not all the militia, but two hundred and thirty of them who constituted the royal guard in Samaria. They were therefore the king's own regiment, and he is commanded by the prophet to put himself at their head.

***Seven thousand.*** How low must the state of Israel have been at this time! These Jarchi thinks were the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

**Verse 18. *Take them alive.*** He was confident of victory. Do not slay them; bring them to me, they may give us some useful information.

**Verse 20. *The Syrians fled*** They were doubtless panic-struck.

**Verse 23. *Their gods are gods of the hills*** It is very likely that the small Israelitish army availed itself of the heights and uneven ground, that they might fight with greater advantage against the Syrian cavalry, for Ben-hadad came up against Samaria with horses and chariots, 1 Kings 20:1. These therefore must be soon thrown into confusion when charging in such circumstances; indeed, the chariots must be nearly useless.

***Let us fight against them in the plain*** There our horses and chariots will all be able to bear on the enemy, and there their gods, whose influence is confined to the hills, will not be able to help them. It was a general belief in the heathen world that each district had its tutelary and protecting deity, who could do nothing out of his own sphere.

**Verse 24. *Take the kings away*** These were not acquainted with military affairs, or they had not competent skill. Put experienced captains in their place, and fight not but on the plains, and you will be sure of victory.

**Verse 26. *Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek***

There were several towns of this name; see the notes on Joshua 12:18. It is supposed that the town mentioned here was situated in Libanus, upon the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos.

**Verse 28. *Because the Syrians have said*** God resents their blasphemy, and is determined to punish it. They shall now be discomfited in such a way as to show that God's power is every where, and that the multitude of a host is nothing against him.

**Verse 29. *Slew a hundred thousand footmen in one day.*** This number is enormous; but the MSS. and versions give no various reading.

**Verse 30. *A wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand*** From the first view of this text it would appear that when the Syrians fled to Aphek, and shut themselves within the walls, the Israelites immediately brought all hands, and sapped the walls, in consequence of which a large portion fell, and buried twenty-seven thousand men. But perhaps the hand of God was more immediately in this disaster; probably a burning wind is meant. See at the end of the chapter. {1 Kings 20:43}

***Came into the city, into an inner chamber.*** However the passage above may be understood, the city was now, in effect, taken; and Ben-hadad either betook himself with his few followers to the citadel or to some secret hiding-place, where he held the council with his servants immediately mentioned.

**Verse 31. *Put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads*** Let us show ourselves humbled in the deepest manner, and let us put ropes about our necks, and go submitting to his mercy, and deprecating his wrath. The citizens of Calais are reported to have acted nearly in the same way when they surrendered their city to Edward III., king of England, in 1346. See at the end. {1 Kings 20:43}

**Verse 32. *Thy servant Ben-hadad*** See the vicissitude of human affairs! A little before he was the haughtiest of all tyrants, and Ahab calls him his lord; now, so much is he humbled, that he will be glad to be reputed Ahab's slave!



**Verse 33. *Did hastily catch it*** They were watching to see if any kind word should be spoken by him, from which they might draw a favorable omen; and when they heard him use the word brother, it gave them much encouragement.

**Verse 34. *Thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus*** It appears that it was customary for foreigners to have a place assigned to them, particularly in maritime towns, where they might deposit and vend their merchandise. This was the very origin of European settlements in Asiatic countries: “The people gave an inch to those strangers; and in consequence they took an ell.” Under the pretense of strengthening the place where they kept their wares, to prevent depredations, they built forts, and soon gave laws to their entertainers. In vain did the natives wish them away; they had got power, and would retain it; and at last subjected these countries to their own dominion.

It was customary also, in the time of the crusades, to give those nations which were engaged in them streets, churches, and post dues, in those places which they assisted to conquer. The Genoese and Venetians had each a street in Accon, or St. Jean d’Acre, in which they had their own jurisdiction; with oven, mill, bagnio, weights, and measures. — See William of Tyre, and Harmer’s Observations.

***He made a covenant with him*** According to the words recited above, putting him under no kind of disabilities whatsoever.

**Verse 35. *In the word of the Lord*** By the word or command of the Lord; that is, God has commanded thee to smite me. Refusing to do it, this man forfeited his life, as we are informed in the next verse.

By this emblematical action he intended to inform Ahab that, as the man forfeited his life who refused to smite him when he had the Lord’s command to do it; so he (Ahab) had forfeited his life, because he did not smite Ben-hadad when he had him in his power.

**Verse 36. *A lion found him, and slew him.*** This seems a hard measure, but there was ample reason for it. This person was also one of the sons of the prophets, and he knew that God frequently delivered his counsels in this way, and should have immediately obeyed; for the smiting could have

had no evil in it when God commanded it, and it could be no outrage or injury to his fellow when he himself required him to do it.

**Verse 38. *Disguised himself with ashes upon his face.*** It does not immediately appear how putting ashes upon his face could disguise him. Instead of אפר *apher*, dust, Houbigant conjectures that it should be אפד *aphad*, a fillet or bandage. It is only the corner of the last letter which makes the difference; for the ד *daleth* and ר *resh* are nearly the same, only the shoulder of the former is square, the latter round. That bandage, not dust, was the original reading, seems pretty evident from its remains in two of the oldest versions, the Septuagint and the Chaldee; the former has *και κατεδησατο εν τελαμωνι τους οφθαλμους αυτου*, “And he bound his eyes with a fillet.” The latter has *וכריך במעפריא עינוהי* *ukerich bemaaphira einohi*; “And he covered his eyes with a cloth.” The MSS. of Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi contain no various reading here; but bandage is undoubtedly the true one. However, in the way of mortification, both the Jews and Hindoos put ashes upon their heads and faces, and make themselves sufficiently disgusting.

**Verse 39. *Keep this man*** The drift of this is at once seen; but Ahab, not knowing it, was led to pass sentence on himself.

**Verse 41. *Took the ashes away*** He took the bandage from off his eyes: see on 1 Kings 20:38. It was no doubt of thin cloth, through which he could see, while it served for a sufficient disguise.

**Verse 42. *Thy life shall go for his life*** This was fulfilled at the battle of Ramoth-gilead, where he was slain by the Syrians; see 1 Kings 22:34, 35.

**Verse 43. *Heavy and displeased*** Heavy or afflicted, because of these dreadful tidings; and displeased with the prophet for having announced them. Had he been displeased with himself, and humbled his soul before God, even those judgments, so circumstantially foretold, might have been averted.

1. WE have already seen, in 1 Kings 20:30, that according to our text, twenty-seven thousand men were slain by the falling of a wall. Serious doubts are entertained concerning the legitimacy of this rendering. I have, in the note, given the conjecture concerning sapping the foundation of the

wall, and thus overthrowing them that were upon it. If instead of **חומה** chomah, a wall, we read **חומה** confusion or disorder, then the destruction of the twenty-seven thousand men may appear to have been occasioned by the disorganized state into which they fell; of which their enemies taking advantage, they might destroy the whole with ease.

But **חומה** chomah, a wall, becomes, as Dr. Kennicott has observed, a very different word when written without the **ו** vau, **חמה** which signifies heat; sometimes the sun, vehement heat, or the heat of the noon-day sun; and also the name of a wind, from its suffocating, parching quality.

The same noun, from **חמ** yacham, Dr. Castel explains by exandescencia, furor, venenum; burning, rage, poison. These renderings, says Dr. Kennicott, all concur to establish the sense of a burning wind, eminently blasting and destructive. I shall give a few instances from the Scripture:—

We read in Job 27:21: The east wind carrieth him away; where the word **קדים** kadim is **καυσων**, burning, in the Septuagint; and in the Vulgate, ventus urens, a burning wind. In Ezekiel 19:12: She was plucked up **בחמה** she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit; her strong rods were withered, and the fire consumed them. Hosea (Hosea 13:15) mentions the desolation brought by an east wind, the wind of the Lord. What in Amos 4:9 is, I have smitten you with blasting, in the Vulgate is, in vento vehemente, “with a vehement wind;” and in the Syriac, with a hot wind.

Let us apply these to the history: when Ben-hadad, king of Syria, was besieging Samaria the second time, the Israelites slew of the Syrians one hundred thousand footmen in one day; and it follows, that when the rest of the army fled to Aphek, twenty-seven thousand of the men that were left were suddenly destroyed by **החומה** hachomah, or **החמה** hachamah, a burning wind. That such is the true interpretation, will appear more clearly if we compare the destruction of Ben-hadad’s army with that of Sennacherib, whose sentence is that God would send upon him a BLAST, **רוח** ruach, a wind; doubtless such a wind as would be suddenly destructive. The event is said to be that in the night one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians were smitten by the angel of the Lord, 2 Kings 19:7, 35. The connection of this sentence with the execution of it is

given by the psalmist, who says, Psalm 104:4: God maketh his angels רוחות *ruchoth*, winds; or, maketh the winds his angels, i.e., messengers for the performance of his will. In a note on Psalm 11:6, Professor Michaelis has these words: *Ventus Zilgaphoth, pestilens eurus est, orientalibus notissimus, qui obvia quaevis necat*; “The wind Zilgaphoth is a pestilent east wind, well known to the Asiatics, which suddenly kills those who are exposed to it.” Thevenot mentions such a wind in 1658, that in one night suffocated twenty thousand men. And the Samiel he mentions as having, in 1665, suffocated four thousand persons. “Upon the whole, I conclude,” says the doctor, ‘that as Thevenot has mentioned two great multitudes destroyed by this burning wind, so has holy Scripture recorded the destruction of two much greater multitudes by a similar cause; and therefore we should translate the words thus: But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and THE BURNING WIND fell upon the twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left.’”

2. On the case of Ben-hadad and his servants coming out to Ahab with sackcloth on their loins and ropes about their necks, 1 Kings 20:31, I have referred to that of the six citizens of Calais, in the time of Edward III. I shall give this affecting account from Sir John Froissart, who lived in that time, and relates the story circumstantially, and with that simplicity and detail that give it every appearance of truth. He is the only writer, of all his contemporaries, who gives the relation; and as it is not only illustrative of the text in question, but also very curious and affecting, I will give it in his own words; only observing that, King Edward having closely invested the city in 1346, and the king of France having made many useless attempts to raise the siege, at last withdrew his army, and left it to its fate. “Then,” says Froissart, chap. cxliv., “after the departure of the king of France with his army, the Calesians saw clearly that all hopes of succor were at an end; which occasioned them so much sorrow and distress that the hardiest could scarcely support it. They entreated therefore, most earnestly, the lord Johns de Vienne, their governor, to mount upon the battlements, and make a sign that he wished to hold a parley.

“The king of England, upon hearing this, sent to him Sir Walter Manny and Lord Basset. When they were come near, the lord de Vienne said to them: ‘Dear gentlemen, you, who are very valiant knights, know that the king of France, whose subjects we are, has sent us hither to defend this

town and castle from all harm and damage. This we have done to the best of our abilities; all hopes of help have now left us, so that we are most exceedingly straitened; and if the gallant king, your lord, have not pity upon us, we must perish with hunger. I therefore entreat that you would beg of him to have compassion upon us, and to have the goodness to allow us to depart in the state we are in; and that he will be satisfied with having possession of the town and castle, with all that is within them, as he will find therein riches enough to content him.’ To this Sir Walter Manny replied: ‘John, we are not ignorant of what the king our lord’s intentions are, for he has told them to us; know then, that it is not his pleasure that you should get off so, for he is resolved that you surrender yourselves wholly to his will, to allow those whom he pleases their ransom, or to be put to death; for the Calesians have done him so much mischief, and have, by their obstinate defense, cost him so many lives, and so much money, that he is mightily enraged.’

“The lord de Vienne answered: ‘These conditions are too hard for us; we are but a small number of knights and squires, who have loyally served our lord and master, as you would have done, and have suffered much ill and disquiet: but we will endure more than any men ever did in a similar situation, before we consent that the smallest boy in the town should fare worse than the best. I therefore once more entreat you, out of compassion, to return to the king of England, and beg of him to have pity on us; he will, I trust, grant you this favor; for I have such an opinion of his gallantry as to hope that, through God’s mercy, he will alter his mind.’

“The two lords returned to the king and related what had passed. The king said: ‘He had no intention of complying with the request, but should insist that they surrendered themselves unconditionally to his will.’ Sir Walter replied: ‘My lord, ye may be to blame in this, as you will set us a very bad example; for if you order us to go to any of your castles, we shall not obey you so cheerfully if you put these people to death, for they will retaliate upon us in a similar case.’

“Many barons who were present supported this opinion; upon which the king replied: ‘Gentlemen, I am not so obstinate as to hold my opinion alone against you all. Sir Walter, you will inform the governor of Calais, that the only grace he is to expect from me is, that six of the principal

citizens of Calais march out of the town with bare heads and feet, with ropes round their necks, and the keys of the town and castle in their hands. These six persons shall be at my absolute disposal, and the remainder of the inhabitants pardoned.'

"Sir Walter returned to the lord de Vienne, who was waiting for him on the battlements, and told him all that he had been able to gain from the king. 'I beg of you,' replied the governor, 'that you would be so good as to remain here a little, whilst I go and relate all that has passed to the townsmen; for, as they have desired me to undertake this it is but proper that they should know the result of it.'

"He went to the market place, and caused the bell to be rung; upon which all the inhabitants, men and women, assembled in the town-hall. He then related to them what he had said, and the answers he had received, and that he could not obtain any conditions more favorable; to which they must give a short and immediate answer.

"This information caused the greatest lamentations and despair, so that the hardest heart would have had compassion on them; even the lord de Vienne wept bitterly.

"After a short time the most wealthy citizen of the town, by name Eustace de St. Pierre, rose up and said: 'Gentlemen, both high and low, it would be a very great pity to suffer so many people to die through famine, if any means could be found to prevent it; and it would be highly meritorious in the eyes of our Savior, if such misery could be averted. I have such faith and trust in finding grace before God, if I die to save my townsmen, that I name myself as first of the six.'

"When Eustace had done speaking, they all rose up and almost worshipped him: many cast themselves at his feet with tears and groans. Another citizen, very rich and respected, rose up and said, 'He would be the second to his companion Eustace;' his name was John Daire. After him James Wisant, who was very rich in merchandise and lands, offered himself as companion to his two cousins, as did Peter Wisant, his brother. Two others then named themselves, which completed the number demanded by the king of England. The lord John de Vienne then mounted a small hackney, for it was with difficulty he could walk, (he had been

wounded in the siege,) and conducted them to the gate. There was the greatest sorrow and lamentation over all the town; and in such manner were they attended to the gate, which the governor ordered to be opened and then shut upon him and the six citizens, whom he led to the barriers, and said to Sir Walter Manny, who was there waiting for him, 'I deliver up to you, as governor of Calais, with the consent of the inhabitants, these six citizens; and I swear to you that they were, and are at this day, the most wealthy and respectable inhabitants of Calais. I beg of you, gentle sir, that you would have the goodness to beseech the king that they may not be put to death.' 'I cannot answer for what the king will do with them,' replied Sir Walter; 'but you may depend that I will do all in my power to save them.'

"The barriers were opened, when these six citizens advanced towards the pavilion of the king, and the lord de Vienne re-entered the town.

"When Sir Walter Manny had presented these six citizens to the king, they fell upon their knees, and with uplifted hands said: 'Most gallant king, see before you six citizens of Calais, who have been capital merchants, and who bring you the keys of the castle and of the town. We surrender ourselves to your absolute will and pleasure, in order to save the remainder of the inhabitants of Calais, who have suffered much distress and misery. Condescend, therefore, out of your nobleness of mind, to have mercy and compassion upon us.' All the barons knights, and squires, that were assembled there in great numbers, wept at this sight.

"The king eyed them with angry looks, (for he hated much the people of Calais, for the great losses he had formerly suffered from them at sea,) and ordered their heads to be stricken off. All present entreated the king that he would be more merciful to them, but he would not listen to them. Then Sir Walter Manny said: 'Ah, gentle king, let me beseech you to restrain your anger; you have the reputation of great nobleness of soul, do not therefore tarnish it by such an act as this, nor allow any one to speak in a disgraceful manner of you. In this instance all the world will say you have acted cruelly, if you put to death six such respectable persons, who of their own free will have surrendered themselves to your mercy, in order to save their fellow citizens.' Upon this the king gave a wink, saying, Be it so, and

ordered the headsman to be sent for; for that the Calesians had done him so much damage, it was proper they should suffer for it.

“The queen of England, who was at that time very big with child, fell on her knees, and with tears said: ‘Ah, gentle sir, since I have crossed the sea with great danger to see you, I have never asked you one favor; now I most humbly ask as a gift, for the sake of the Son of the blessed Mary, and for your love to me, that you will be merciful to these six men.’ The king looked at her for some time in silence, and then said: ‘Ah, lady, I wish you had been any where else than here; you have entreated in such a manner that I cannot refuse you; I therefore give them to you, to do as you please with them.’

“The queen conducted the six citizens to her apartments, and had the halts taken from round their necks, new clothed, and served them with a plentiful dinner; she then presented each with nobles, and had them escorted out of the camp in safety.”

This is the whole of this affecting account, which is mentioned by no other writer, and has been thought a proper subject for the pen of the poet, the pencil of the painter, and the burin of the engraver; and which has seldom been fairly represented in the accounts we have of it from our historians. The translation I have borrowed from the accurate edition of Froissart, by Mr. Johns, of Hafod; and to his work, vol. i., p. 367, I must refer for objections to the authenticity of some of the facts stated by the French historian. We see in Eustace de St. Pierre and his five companions the portrait of genuine patriotism. — a principle, almost as rare in the world as the Egyptian phoenix, which leads its possessors to devote their property and consecrate their lives to the public weal; widely different from that spurious birth which is deep in the cry of My country! while it has nothing in view but its places, pensions, and profits. Away with it!



## CHAPTER 21

*Ahab covets the vineyard of Naboth, and wishes to have it either by purchase or exchange, 1, 2. Naboth refuses to alienate it on any account, because it was his inheritance from his fathers, 3. Ahab becomes disconsolate, takes to his bed, and refuses to eat, 4. Jezebel, finding out the cause, promises to give him the vineyard, 5-7. She writes to the nobles of Jezreel to proclaim a fast, to accuse Naboth of blasphemy, carry him out, and stone him to death; which is accordingly done, 8-14. She then tells Ahab to go and take possession of the vineyard; he goes, and is met by Elijah, who denounces on him the heaviest judgments, 15-24. Ahab's abominable character, 25, 26. He humbles himself; and God promises not to bring the threatened public calamities in his days, but in the days of his son, 27-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 1. *After these things*** This and the twentieth chapter are transposed in the Septuagint; this preceding the account of the Syrian war with Ben-hadad. Josephus gives the history in the same order.

**Verse 2. *Give me thy vineyard*** The request of Ahab seems at first view fair and honorable. Naboth's vineyard was nigh to the palace of Ahab, and he wished to add it to his own for a kitchen garden, or perhaps a grass-plot, גַּן יָרָק gan yarak; and he offers to give him either a better vineyard for it, or to give him its worth in money. Naboth rejects the proposal with horror: The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to thee. No man could finally alienate any part of the parental inheritance; it might be sold or mortgaged till the jubilee, but at that time it must revert to its original owner, if not redeemed before; for this God had particularly enjoined Leviticus 25:14-17, 25-28: therefore Naboth properly said, 1 Kings 21:3, The Lord forbid it me, to give the inheritance of my fathers. Ahab most evidently wished him to alienate it finally, and this is what God's law had expressly forbidden; therefore he could not, consistently with his duty to God, indulge Ahab; and it was

high iniquity in Ahab to tempt him to do it; and to covet it showed the depravity of Ahab's soul. But we see farther that, despotic as those kings were, they dared not seize on the inheritance of any man. This would have been a flagrant breach of the law and constitution of the country; and this indeed would have been inconsistent with the character which they sustained, viz., the Lord's vicegerents. The Jewish kings had no authority either to alter the old laws, or to make new ones. "The Hindoos," says Mr. Ward, "are as strongly attached to their homesteads as the Jews were. Though the heads of the family be employed in a distant part of the country, and though the homesteads may be almost in ruins, they cling still to the family inheritance with a fondness bordering on superstition."

**Verse 4. *He laid him down upon his bed*** Poor soul! he was lord over ten-twelfths of the land, and became miserable because he could not get a poor man's vineyard added to all that he possessed! It is a true saying, "That soul in which God dwells not, has no happiness: and he who has God has a satisfying portion." Every privation and cross makes an unholy soul unhappy; and privations and crosses it must ever meet with, therefore:—

*"Where'er it goes is hell;  
itself is hell!"*

**Verse 7. *Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?*** Naboth, not Ahab, is king. If he have authority to refuse, and thou have no power to take, he is the greater man of the two. This is the vital language of despotism and tyranny.

**Verse 8. *She wrote letters in Ahab's name*** She counterfeited his authority by his own consent; and he lent his signet to stamp that authority.

**Verse 9. *Proclaim a fast*** Intimate that there is some great calamity coming upon the nation, because of some evil tolerated in it.

***Set Naboth on high*** Bring him to a public trial.

**Verse 10. *Set two men*** For life could not be attained but on the evidence of two witnesses at least.

***Sons of Belial*** Men who will not scruple to tell lies and take a false oath.

***Thou didst blaspheme God and the king.*** Thou art an atheist and a rebel. Thou hast spoken words injurious to the perfections and nature of God; and thou hast spoken words against the crown and dignity of the king. The words literally are, Naboth hath BLESSED Clod and the king; or, as Parkhurst contends, “Thou hast blessed the false gods and Molech,” **וּמֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהִים** And though Jezebel was herself an abominable idolatress; yet, as the law of Moses still continued in force, she seems to have been wicked enough to have destroyed Naboth, upon the false accusation of blessing the heathen Aleim and Molech, which subjected him to death by Deuteronomy 12:6; 17:2-7. The first meaning appears the most simple.

Many think that the word **בָּרַךְ** barach signifies both to bless and curse; and so it is interpreted in most Lexicons: it is passing strange that out of the same word proceedeth blessing and cursing; and to give such opposite and self-destructive meanings to any word is very dangerous. Parkhurst denies that it ever has the meaning of cursing, and examines all the texts where it is said to occur with this meaning; and shows that blessing, not cursing, is to be understood in all those places: see him under **בָּרַךְ**, sec. vi.

**Verse 13. *And stoned him with stones*** As they pretended to find him guilty of treason against God and the king, it is likely they destroyed the whole of his family; and then the king seized on his grounds as confiscated, or as escheated to the king, without any heir at law. That his family was destroyed appears strongly intimated, 2 Kings 9:26; Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, AND THE BLOOD OF HIS SONS, saith the Lord.

**Verse 15. *Arise, take possession*** By what rites or in what forms this was done, we do not know.

**Verse 18. *Go down to meet Ahab*** This was the next day after the murder, as we learn from the above quotation, 2 Kings 9:26.

**Verse 19. *In the place where dogs licked, etc.*** It is in vain to look for a literal fulfillment of this prediction. Thus it would have been fulfilled, but the humiliation of Ahab induced the merciful God to say, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in the days of his son, 1 Kings 21:29. Now dogs did lick the blood of Ahab; but it was at the pool of Samaria, where his chariot and his armor were washed, after he had received his death wound

at Ramoth-gilead; but some think this was the place where Naboth was stoned: see 1 Kings 22:38. And how literally the prediction concerning his son was fulfilled, see 2 Kings 9:25, where we find that the body of Jehoram his son, just then slain by an arrow that had passed through his heart, was thrown into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; and there, doubtless, the dogs licked his blood, if they did not even devour his body. There is a similar idea of the propriety of punishment overtaking the culprit in the place where he had committed the crime, expressed by Orestes to AEGISTHUS, SOPH. Elect. 1495.

— χωρει δ' ενθαπερ κατεκτανες πατερα τον αμον,  
ως εν ταυτω θανης.

— *Go where thou slew'st my father,  
That in the self-same place thou too may'st die.*

**Verse 20. *Thou hast sold thyself to work evil*** See a similar form of speech, Romans 7:14. Thou hast totally abandoned thyself to the service of sin. Satan is become thy absolute master, and thou his undivided slave.

**Verse 23. *The dogs shall eat Jezebel*** This was most literally fulfilled; see 2 Kings 9:36. The carcasses of poor Hindoos, and of persons who have received public punishment, are thrown into the rivers, and floating to the side, are devoured by dogs, vultures, and crows.

**Verse 25. *Did sell himself to work wickedness*** He hired himself to the devil for this very purpose, that he might work wickedness. This was to be his employment, and at this he labored.

***In the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.*** A good wife is from the Lord; a bad wife is from the devil: Jezebel was of this kind; and she has had many successors.

**Verse 27. *He rent his clothes*** He was penetrated with sorrow, and that evidently unfeigned.

***Put sackcloth upon his flesh*** He humbled himself before God and man.

***And fasted*** He afflicted his body for his soul's benefit.

***Lay in sackcloth*** Gave the fullest proof that his repentance was real.

*And went softly.* Walked barefooted; so the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic. The Vulgate has demisso capite, “with his head hanging down.” Houbigant translates went groaning. Jarchi says that the word **לָנַח** at, used here, signifies to be unshod. This is its most likely sense. All these things prove that Ahab’s repentance was genuine; and God’s approbation of it puts it out of doubt. The slow and measured pace which always accompanies deep and reflective sorrow is also alluded to by AEschylus, where the Chorus are thus shortly addressed on the defeat of Xerxes. — AESCH. Pers. 1073.

γλασθ' αβροβαται

“*With light and noiseless step lament.*”

**Verse 29.** *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself* He did abase himself; he did truly repent him of his sins, and it was such a repentance as was genuine in the sight of God: He humbleth himself BEFORE ME.

The penitent heart ever meets the merciful eye of God; repentance is highly esteemed by the Father of compassion, even where it is comparatively shallow and short-lived. Any measure of godly sorrow has a proportionate measure of God’s regard; where it is deep and lasting, the heart of God is set upon it. He that mourns shall be comforted; thus hath God spoken, and though repentance for our past sins can purchase no favor, yet without it God will not grant us his salvation.

## CHAPTER 22

*Jehoshaphat King of Judah, and Ahab King of Israel, unite against the Syrians, in order to recover Ramoth-gilead, 1-4. They inquire of false prophets, who promise them success. Micaiah, a true prophet, foretells the disasters of the war, 5-17. A lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets persuades Ahab to go up against Ramoth, 18-29. The confederate armies are routed, and the king of Israel slain, 30-36. Death and burial of Ahab, 37-40. Character of Jehoshaphat, 41-47. He makes a fleet in order to go to Ophir for gold, which is wrecked at Ezion-geber, 48. His death, 49. He is succeeded by his son Jehoram, 50. Ahaziah succeeds his father Ahab, and reigns wickedly, 51, 52.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22

**Verse 1. *Three years without war*** That is, from the time that Ahab made the covenant with Ben-hadad, mentioned 1 Kings 20:34. And probably in that treaty it was stipulated that Ramoth-gilead should be restored to Israel; which not being done, Ahab formed a confederacy with Judah, and determined to take it by force.

**Verse 4. *Wilt thou go with me*** We find that there was a good understanding between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, which no doubt was the consequence of a matrimonial alliance between the son of the former, Jehoram, and the daughter of the latter, Athaliah; see 2 Chronicles 18:1; 2 Kings 8:18. This coalition did not please God, and Jehoshaphat is severely reprov'd for it by Jehu the seer, 2 Chronicles 19:1-3.

**Verse 6. *About four hundred men*** These were probably the prophets of Asherah or Venus, maintained by Jezebel, who were not present at the contention on Mount Carmel. See 1 Kings 18:19, etc.

**Verse 8. *Micaiah the son of Imlah*** The Jews suppose that it was this prophet who reprov'd Ahab for dismissing Ben-hadad, 1 Kings 20:35, etc. And that it was because of the judgments with which he had threatened

him, that Ahab hated him: I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.

**Verse 9. *The king of Israel called an officer*** סָרִיס saris, literally a eunuch; probably a foreigner, for it was not lawful to disgrace an Israelite by reducing him to such a state.

**Verse 11. *Zedekiah-made him horns of iron*** This was in imitation of that sort of prophecy which instructed by significative actions. This was frequent among the prophets of the Lord.

**Verse 13. *The words of the prophets declare good*** What notion could these men have of prophecy, when they supposed it was in the power of the prophet to model the prediction as he pleased, and have the result accordingly?

**Verse 15. *Go, and prosper*** This was a strong irony; as if he had said, All your prophets have predicted success; you wish me to speak as they speak: Go, and prosper; for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king. These were the precise words of the false prophets, (see 1 Kings 22:6, 12,) and were spoken by Micaiah in such a tone and manner as at once showed to Ahab that he did not believe them; hence the king adjures him, 1 Kings 22:16, that he would speak to him nothing but truth; and on this the prophet immediately relates to him the prophetic vision which pointed out the disasters which ensued.

It is worthy of remark that this prophecy of the king's prophets is couched in the same ambiguous terms by which the false prophets in the heathen world endeavored to maintain their credit, while they deluded their votaries. The reader will observe that the word it is not in the original: The Lord will deliver IT into the hand of the king; and the words are so artfully constructed that they may be interpreted for or against; so that, be the event whatever it might, the juggling prophet could save his credit by saying he meant what had happened. Thus then the prophecy might have been understood: The Lord will deliver (Ramoth-gilead) into the king's (Ahab's) hand; or, The Lord will deliver (Israel) into the king's hand; i.e., into the hand of the king of Syria. And Micaiah repeats these words of uncertainty in order to ridicule them and expose their fallacy.

The following oracles among the heathens were of this same dubious nature, in order that the priests' credit might be saved, let the event turn out as it might. Thus the Delphic oracle spoke to Croesus words which are capable of a double meaning, and which he understood to his own destruction:—

*Croesus, Halym penetrans, magnam subvertet opum vim,*

Which says, in effect:—

*“If you march against Cyrus, he will either overthrow you,  
or you will overthrow him.”*

He trusted in the latter, the former took place. He was deluded, and yet the oracle maintained its credit. So in the following:—

*Aio te, AEacida, Romanos vincere posse  
Ibis redibis nunquam in bello peribis.*

Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, understood by this that he should conquer the Romans, against whom he was then making war; but the oracle could be thus translated: “The Romans shall overcome thee.” He trusted in the former, made unsuccessful war, and was overcome; and yet the juggling priest saved his credit. The latter line is capable of two opposite meanings:—

*“Thou shalt go, thou shalt return,  
thou shalt never perish in war.”*

Or,

*“Thou shalt go, thou shalt never return,  
thou shalt perish in war.”*

When prophecies and oracles were not delivered in this dubious way, they were generally couched in such intricate and dark terms that the assistance of the oracle was necessary to explain the oracle, and then it was *ignotum per ignotius*, a dark saying paraphrased by one yet more obscure.

**Verse 17. *These have no master*** Here the prophet foretells the defeat of Israel, and the death of the king; they were as sheep that had not a



shepherd, people that had no master, the political shepherd and master (Ahab) shall fall in battle.

**Verse 19. *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne*** This is a mere parable, and only tells in figurative language, what was in the womb of providence, the events which were shortly to take place, the agents employed in them, and the permission on the part of God for these agents to act. Micaiah did not choose to say before this angry and impious king, “Thy prophets are all liars; and the devil, the father of lies, dwells in them;” but he represents the whole by this parable, and says the same truths in language as forcible, but less offensive.

**Verse 22. *Go forth, and do so.*** This is no more than, “God has permitted

**Verse 25. *When thou shalt go into an inner chamber*** It is probable that this refers to some Divine judgment which fell upon this deceiver. Hearing of the tragical result of the battle, he no doubt went into a secret place to hide himself from the resentment of Jezebel, and the Israelitish courtiers, and there it is probable he perished; but how, when, or where, is not mentioned.

**Verse 27. *Feed him with bread of affliction.*** Deprive him of all the conveniences and comforts of life; treat him severely; just keep him alive, that he may see my triumph.

**Verse 30. *I will disguise myself*** Probably he had heard of the orders given by Ben-hadad to his thirty-two captains, to fight with the king of Israel only; that is, to make their most powerful attack where he commanded, in order to take him prisoner, that he might lead him captive whose captive he formerly was; and therefore he disguised himself that he might not be known.

***But put thou on thy robes.*** What is meant by this? He could not mean, “Appear as the king of Judah, for they will not molest thee, as the matter of contention lies between them and me;” this is Jarchi’s turn. For if Jehoshaphat aided Ahab, is it to be supposed that the Syrians would spare him in battle? A general in the civil wars of England, when he had brought his army in sight of their foes, thus addressed them: “Yonder are your enemies; if you do not kill them, they will kill you.” So it might be said in the case of Jehoshaphat and the Syrians.

The Septuagint gives the clause a different and more intelligible turn: “I will cover (conceal) myself, and enter into the battle; **και συ ενδυσαι τον ματισμον μου**, but put thou on MY robes.” And does it not appear that he did put on Ahab’s robes? And was it not this that caused the Syrians to mistake him for the king of Israel? 1 Kings 22:32.

**Verse 34. *Drew a bow at a venture*** It is supposed that he shot, as the archers in general did, not aiming at any person in particular.

The word **לתמו** lethummo, which we translate in his simplicity, has been variously understood; in his integrity, his uprightness; in his perfection; i.e., to the utmost of his skill and strength. This is most probably the meaning; and may imply both aim and power, having his butt full in view.

In cases where the archers wished to do the greatest execution, they bent their bows, and pulled till the subtending string drew back the arrow up to its head. This they could not do always, because it required their whole strength; and they could not put forth their utmost effort each time and continue to discharge many shots. Our old national ballad of the Chevy-chace mentions the slaying of Sir Hugh Montgomery, who had slain Earl Percy, in nearly the same way that Ahab appears to have been shot:—

*“And thus did both these nobles die,  
Whose courage none could stain:  
An English archer then perceived  
His noble lord was slain,  
Who had a bow bent in his hand  
Made of a trusty tree;*

*An arrow, of a cloth-yard long,  
Up to the head drew he; Against  
Sir Hugh Montgomery then  
So right his shaft he set,  
The gray goose wing that was thereon  
In his heart’s blood was wet.”*

***Between the joints of the harness*** “Between the cuirass and the lower part of the helmet;” and then the arrow must pass through the neck, just above the breast: or “between the cuirass and the cuissarts;” and then the arrow must pass through the abdomen, or just where the armor of the thighs joins to that which covers the breast and belly.

The Vulgate has *Inter pulmonem et stomachum*; “Between the lungs and the stomach;” consequently, in the region of the heart.

**Verse 35. *The king was stayed up*** He did not wish his misfortune should be known, lest his troops should be discouraged.

**Verse 36. *Every man to his city*** It appears that the Israelites and Jews maintained the fight the whole of the day; but when at evening the king died, and this was known, there was a proclamation made, probably with the consent of both Syrians and Israelites, that the war was over. Ahab being dead, his subjects did not choose to contend for Ramoth-gilead; so the Israelites went to their own cities, and the Syrians to their own country.

**Verse 38. *The dogs licked up his blood*** Some of the rabbins think that this was in the very place where Naboth was stoned; see on 1 Kings 21:19. The Septuagint translates this verse strangely: “And the swine and the dogs licked his blood, and the whores bathed themselves in his blood, according to the word of the Lord.” It is certain that the Hebrew words, **הזנות רחצו** hazzonoth rachatsu, “washed his armor,” might be translated as the Septuagint have done; “and the whores (or public women) washed,” etc. And so the rabbins seem to have understood the words; but then they suppose that Jezebel had made him two images of prostitutes, which he had with him in the chariot. It is not worth inquiring into the use for which they say these images were made. See Kimchi and Jarchi.

**Verse 39. *Ivory house*** A royal palace which he built in Samaria, decorated with ivory, and hence called the ivory house. Amos the prophet speaks against this luxury, Amos 3:15.

**Verse 43. *The high places were not taken away*** In 2 Chronicles 17:6, it is expressly said, that he did take away the high places. Allowing that the text is right in 2 Chron., the two places may be easily reconciled. There were two kinds of high places in the land: 1. Those used for idolatrous purposes. 2. Those that were consecrated to God, and were used before the temple was built. The former he did take away; the latter he did not. But some think the parallel place in 2 Chronicles 17:6 is corrupted, and that, instead of **ועוד הסיר** veod hesir, “and moreover he took away,” we should read, **הסיר ולא** velo hesir, “and he did NOT take away.”

**Verse 46. *The remnant of the sodomites*** **הקדש** of the consecrated persons; or it may rather apply here to the system of pollution, effeminacy, and debauch. He destroyed the thing itself; the abominations of Priapus, and the rites of Venus, Baal, and Ashtaroth. No more of that impure worship was to be found in Judea.

**Verse 47. *There was no king in Edom*** It is plain that the compiler of this book lived after the days of Jehoshaphat, in whose time the Edomites revolted; see 2 Kings 8:22. David had conquered the Edomites, and they continued to be governed by deputies, appointed by the kings of Judah, till they recovered their liberty, as above. This note is introduced by the writer to account for Jehoshaphat’s building ships at Ezion-geber, which

was in the territory of the Edomites, and which showed them to be at that time under the Jewish yoke.

**Verse 48. *Ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold*** In the parallel place (2 Chronicles 20:36) it is said that Jehoshaphat joined himself to Ahaziah, to make ships to go to Tharshish; and they made the ships in Ezion-geber. Concerning these places, and the voyage thither, see the notes on 1 Kings 9:26-28; 10:11, 22. Some translate, instead of ships of Tharshish, ships of burden. See Houbigant, who expresses himself doubtful as to the meaning of the word.

**Verse 49. *But Jehoshaphat would not.*** It appears from the above cited place in Chronicles that Jehoshaphat did join in making and sending ships to Tharshish, and it is possible that what is here said is spoken of a second expedition, in which Jehoshaphat would not join Ahaziah. But instead of **וְלֹא אָבָה** *velo abah*, “he would not,” perhaps we should read **וְלוֹ אָבָה** *velo abah*, “he consented to him;” two words pronounced exactly in the same way, and differing but in one letter, viz., an א aleph for a ו vau. This reading, however, is not supported by any MS. or version; but the emendation seems just; for there are several places in these historical books in which there are mistakes of transcribers which nothing but violent criticism can restore, and to this it is dangerous to resort, but in cases of the last necessity. Critics have recommended the 48th and 49th verses to be read thus: “Jehoshaphat had built ships of burden at Ezion-geber, to go to Ophir for gold. 49. And Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, had said to Jehoshaphat, Let my servants, I pray thee, go with thy servants in the ships: to which Jehoshaphat consented. But the ships went not thither; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.” This is Houbigant’s translation, who contends that “the words of the 48th verse, but they went not, should be placed at the end of the 49th verse, for who can believe that the sacred writer should first relate that the ships were broken, and then that Ahaziah requested of Jehoshaphat that his servants might embark with the servants of Jehoshaphat?” This bold critic, who understood the Hebrew language better than any man in Europe, has, by happy conjectures, since verified by the testimony of MSS., removed the blots of many careless transcribers from the sacred volume.

**THE****SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS,****OTHERWISE CALLED****THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS**

- Year from the Creation, according to the English Bible, 3108.
- Year before the birth of Christ, 892.
- Year before the vulgar era of Christ's nativity 896.
- Year since the Deluge, according to Archbishop Usher and the English Bible, 1452.
- Year of the Cali Yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 2206. Chronologers vary very considerably in their calculations of the time which elapsed between the flood and the birth of Abraham, the difference of the two extremes amounting to nine hundred years! Archbishop Usher's computation is from the common Hebrew text, with the single exception of fixing the birth of Abraham in the one hundred and thirtieth year of the life of his father, instead of the seventieth, in order to reconcile Genesis 11:26, 32, with Acts 7:4. But these passages are better reconciled, in the opinion of Dr. Kennicott, by stating (with the Samaritan Pentateuch) the whole life of Terah to have been one hundred and forty-five years, instead of two hundred and five, as in our common Bibles.
- Year from the destruction of Troy, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 289.
- Year from the foundation of Solomon's temple, 115.
- Year since the division of Solomon's monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 79.

- Year before the era of Iphitus, who re-established the Olympic Games, three hundred and thirty-eight years after their institution by Hercules, or about eight hundred and eighty-four years before the commencement of the Christian era, 12.
- Year before the conquest of Coroebus at Elis, usually styled the first Olympiad, (being the 28th Olympiad after their re-establishment by Iphitus,) 120.
- Year before the Varronian or generally received era of the building of Rome, 143.
- Year before the building of Rome, according to Cato and the *Fasti Consulares*, 144.
- Year before the building of Rome, according to Polybius, the historian, 145.
- Year before the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, who lived about two hundred and twenty-five years before the Christian era, 149.
- Year before the commencement of the Nabonassarean era, 149. The years of this epoch contained uniformly 365 days, so that 1461 Nabonassarean were equal to 1460 Julian years. This era commenced on the fourth of the calends of March, (Feb. 26,) B.C. 747; which was the year in which Romulus laid the foundation of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor.
- Year of the Julian Period, 3818.
- Year of the Dionysian Period, 94.
- Cycle of the Sun, 10.
- Cycle of the Moon, 18.
- Year of Megacles, the sixth perpetual archon of the Athenians, 26.
- Oczazer, the immediate predecessor of Sardanapalus, was king over the Assyrians about this time, according to Strauchius: but when this king reigned is very uncertain, Scaliger fixing the fall of Sardanapalus, which ended the Assyrian empire, in the year of the Julian Period, 3841; Langius, in 3852 of the same epocha; and Eusebius, in the year before Christ, 820.
- Year of Agrippa Silvius, the eleventh king of the Latins, 20.
- Year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, 18.
- Year of Ahaziah, king of Israel, 2.
- Last year of the Prophet Elijah.
- Tenth year of Elisha.





## CHAPTER 1

*Ahaziah, being hurt by a fall, sends messengers to Baal-zebub to inquire whether he shall recover, 1, 2. They are met by Elijah, who sends them back with the information that he shall surely die, 3-8. The king sends a captain and fifty men, to bring Elijah to Samaria, on which fire comes down from heaven, and destroys both him and his men, 9, 10. Another captain and fifty men are sent, who are likewise destroyed, 11, 12. A third is sent, who behaves himself humbly, and Elijah is commanded to accompany him; he obeys, comes to the king, reproveth his idolatry, and announces his death, 13-16. Ahaziah dies and Jehoram reigns in his stead, 17, 18.*

In the preface to the First Book of Kings, I have spoken at large concerning both these books, the author, time of writing, etc., etc., to which I must refer my readers, as that preface is common to both.

The Second Book of Kings contains the history of three hundred and eight years, from the rebellion of Moab, A.M. 3108, to the ruin of the kingdom of Judah, A.M. 3416.

The history, on the whole, exhibits little less than a series of crimes, disasters, Divine benefits, and Divine judgments. In the kingdom of Judah we meet with a few kings who feared God, and promoted the interests of pure religion in the land; but the major part were idolaters and profligates of the highest order.

The kingdom of Israel was still more corrupt: all its kings were determined idolaters; profligate, vicious, and cruel tyrants. Elijah and Elisha stood up in the behalf of God and truth in this fallen, idolatrous kingdom, and bore a strong testimony against the corruptions of the princes, and the profligacy of the people: their powerful ministry was confined to the ten tribes; Judah had its own prophets, and those in considerable number.

At length the avenging hand of God fell first upon Israel, and afterwards upon Judah. Israel after many convulsions, torn by domestic and foreign

wars, was at length wholly subjugated by the king of Assyria, the people led away into captivity, and the land re-peopled by strangers, A.M. 3287.

The kingdom of Judah continued some time longer, but was at last overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar; Zedekiah, its last king, was taken prisoner; his eyes put out; and the principal part of the people were carried into captivity, which lasted about seventy years. The captivity began under Jehoiakim, A.M. 3402, and ended under Belshazzar, A.M. 2470 or 3472. There was after this a partial restoration of the Jews, but they never more rose to any consequence among the nations; and at last their civil polity was finally dissolved by the Romans, and their temple burnt, A.D. 70; and from that time until now they became fugitives and vagabonds over the face of the earth, universally detested by mankind. But should they not be loved for their fathers' sake? Are they not men and brothers? Will persecution and contempt convert them to Christianity, or to any thing that is good?

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. *Moab rebelled*** The Moabites had been subdued by David, and laid under tribute, 2 Kings 3:4, and 2 Samuel 8:2. After the division of the two kingdoms, the Moabites fell partly under the dominion of Israel, and partly under that of Judah, until the death of Ahab, when they arose and shook off this yoke. Jehoram confederated with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, in order to reduce them. See this war, 2 Kings 3:5.

**Verse 2. *Fell down through a lattice*** Perhaps either through the flat roof of his house, or over or through the balustrades with which the roof was surrounded.

***Go, inquire of Baal-zebub*** Literally, the fly-god, or master of flies. The Septuagint has βααλ μυιον, Baal the fly. He was the tutelary god of Ekron, and probably was used at first as a kind of tesm, to drive away flies. He became afterwards a very respectable devil, and was supposed to have great power and influence. In the New Testament Beelzebub is a common name for Satan himself, or the prince of devils. See my notes on Matthew 10:25.

**Verse 4. *But shalt surely die.*** The true God tells you this; he in whose hands are both life and death, who can kill and make alive. Baal-zebul can do nothing; God has determined that your master shall die.

**Verse 8. *He was a hairy man*** That is, he wore a rough garment, either made of camels' hair, as his successor John Baptist's was, or he wore a skin dressed with the hair on. Some think that the meaning is, he had very long hair and a long beard. The ancient prophets all wore rough garments, or upper coats made of the skins of beasts: They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, says the apostle, Hebrews 11:37.

**Verse 9. *A captain of fifty with his fifty.*** It is impossible that such a man as Ahaziah, in such circumstances, could have had any friendly designs in sending a captain and fifty soldiers for the prophet; and the manner in which they are treated shows plainly that they went with a hostile intent.

***And he spake unto him, Thou man of God*** Thou prophet of the Most High.

**Verse 10. *And there came down fire*** Some have blamed the prophet for destroying these men, by bringing down fire from heaven upon them. But they do not consider that it was no more possible for Elijah to bring down fire from heaven, than for them to do it. God alone could send the fire; and as he is just and good, he would not have destroyed these men had there not been a sufficient cause to justify the act. It was not to please Elijah, or to gratify any vindictive humor in him, that God thus acted; but to show his own power and justice. No entreaty of Elijah could have induced God to have performed an act that was wrong in itself. Elijah, personally, had no concern in the business. God led him simply to announce on these occasions what he himself had determined to do. If I be a man of God, i.e., as surely as I am a man of God, fire SHALL come down from heaven, and SHALL consume thee and thy fifty. This is the literal meaning of the original; and by it we see that Elijah's words were only declarative, and not imprecatory.

**Verse 15. *And the angel of the Lord said-Go down with him*** This is an additional proof that Elijah was then acting under particular inspirations: he had neither will nor design of his own. He waited to know the counsel, declare the will, and obey the command, of his God.

***And he arose, and went down*** He did not even regard his personal safety or his life; he goes without the least hesitation to the king, though he had reason to suppose he would be doubly irritated by his prediction, and the death of one hundred of his men. But with all these consequences he had nothing to do; he was the ambassador of the King eternal, and his honor and life were in the hands of his Master.

**Verse 17. *And Jehoram reigned in his stead*** The Vulgate, Septuagint, and Syriac say, Jehoram HIS BROTHER reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram. There were two Jehorams who were contemporary: the first, the son of Ahab, brother to Ahaziah, and his successor in the kingdom of Israel; the second, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, who succeeded his father in Judah. But there is a difficulty here: "How is it that Jehoram the brother of Ahaziah began to reign in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, seeing that, according to 2 Kings 3:1, he began his reign in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat; and, according to 2 Kings 8:16, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began to reign in the fifth year of Jehoram king of Israel?" Calmet and others answer thus: "Jehoram king of Israel began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, which was the second year after this same Jehoshaphat had given the viceroyalty to his son Jehoram; and afterwards Jehoshaphat communicated the royalty to Jehoram his successor, two years before his death, and the fifth year of Jehoram, king of Israel." Dr. Lightfoot takes another method:—"Observe," says he, "these texts, 1 Kings 22:61: Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years; and 2 Kings 1:17: And Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken, and Jehoram reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; and 2 Kings 3:1: Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. By these scriptures it is most plain, that both Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, and Ahaziah the son of Ahab, began to reign in the seventeenth of Jehoshaphat; for who sees not in these texts that Jehoshaphat's eighteenth, when Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign, is called the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat? Now Jehoshaphat's reign was not yet expired by eight or nine years, for this was in his seventeenth year, and he reigned twenty-five years, 1 Kings

22:42; nor was Ahab's reign expired by two or three years, for this was in his twentieth year, and he reigned twenty-two years. 1 Kings 16:29. But the reason why both their sons came thus into their thrones in their lifetime, and both in the same year, was because their fathers, Jehoshaphat and Ahab, were both engaged in the war against the Syrians about Ramoth-gilead: and while they were providing for it, and carrying it on, they made their sons viceroys, and set them to reign in their stead, while they were absent or employed upon that expedition." This is very probable, and seems well supported by the above texts, and would solve all the difficulties with which many have been puzzled and not a few stumbled, had we sufficient evidence for the viceroyalty here mentioned.

## CHAPTER 2

*Elijah, about to be taken up to heaven, goes in company with Elisha from Gilgal to Beth-el, 1, 2. Thence to Jericho, 3-5. And thence to Jordan, 6, 7. Elijah smites the waters with his mantle; they divide, and he and Elisha pass over on dry ground, 8. Elijah desires Elisha to ask what he should do for him; who requests a double portion of his spirit, which is promised on a certain condition, 9, 10. A chariot and horses of fire descend; and Elijah mounts, and ascends by a whirlwind to heaven, 11. Elisha gets his mantle, comes back to Jordan, smites the waters with it, and they divide, and he goes over, 12-14. The sons of the prophets see that the spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha, 15. They propose to send fifty men to seek Elijah, supposing the Spirit of the Lord might have cast him on some mountain or valley; after three days' search, they return not having found him, 16-18. The people of Jericho apply to Elisha to heal their unwholesome water, 19. He casts salt into the spring in the name of Jehovah, and the water becomes wholesome, 20-22. Forty-two young persons of Bethel, mocking him, are slain by two she-bears, 23, 24. He goes to Carmel, and returns to Samaria, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. *When the Lord would take up Elijah*** It appears that God had revealed this intended translation, not only to Elijah himself, but also to Elisha, and to the schools of the prophets, both at Beth-el and Jericho, so that they were all expecting this solemn event.

**Verse 2. *Tarry here, I pray thee*** He either made these requests through humility, not wishing any person to be witness of the honor conferred on him by God, or with the desire to prove the fidelity of Elisha, whether he would continue to follow and serve him.

**Verse 3. *Knowest thou that the Lord*** Thus we see that it was a matter well known to all the sons of the prophets. This day the Lord will take thy master and instructor from thee.

**Verse 7. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets** They fully expected this extraordinary event, and they could have known it only from Elijah himself, or by a direct revelation from God.

**Verse 8. Took his mantle** *την μηλωτην αυτου*, his sheep-skin, says the Septuagint. The skins of beasts, dressed with the hair on, were formerly worn by prophets and priests as the simple insignia of their office. As the civil authority was often lodged in the hands of such persons, particularly among the Jews, mantles of this kind were used by kings and high civil officers when they bore no sacred character. The custom continues to the present day; a lamb's skin hood or cloak is the badge which certain graduates in our universities wear; and the royal robes of kings and great officers of state are adorned with the skins of the animal called the ermine.

**They were divided hither and thither** This was a most astonishing miracle, and could be performed only by the almighty power of God.

**Verse 9. A double portion of thy spirit be upon me.** This in reference to the law, Deuteronomy 21:17: He shall acknowledge the first-born, by giving him a DOUBLE PORTION of all that he hath—the right of the first-born is his. Elisha considered himself the only child or first-born of Elijah, as the disciples of eminent teachers were called their children; so here he claims a double portion of his spiritual influence, any other disciples coming in for a single share only. Sons of the prophets means no more than the disciples or scholars of the prophets. The original words *פִּי שְׁנַיִם* pi shenayim, mean rather two parts, than double the quantity.

**Verse 10. A hard thing** This is what is not in my power, God alone can give this; yet if thou see me taken away from thee, it shall be so. Perhaps this means no more than, “If thou continue with me till I am translated, God will grant this to thee;” for on the mere seeing or not seeing him in the moment in which he was taken away, this Divine gift could not depend.

**Verse 11. Elijah went up-into heaven** He was truly translated; and the words here leave us no room to indulge the conjecture of Dr. Priestley, who supposes that as “Enoch, (probably Moses,) Elijah, and Christ, had no relation to any other world or planet, they are no doubt in this;” for we are told that Elijah went up into heaven; and we know, from the sure

testimony of the Scripture, that our blessed Lord is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ever living to make intercession for us.

**Verse 12. *The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.*** The Chaldee translates these words thus: ‘My master, my master! who, by thy intercession, wast of more use to Israel than horses and chariots.’ This is probably the sense.

In the Book of Ecclesiasticus, chap. 48:1, etc., the fiery horses and chariot are considered as an emblem of that burning zeal which Elijah manifested in the whole of his ministry: “Then stood up Elijah the prophet as fire, and his word burned as a lamp,” etc.

***And rent them in two pieces.*** As a sign of sorrow for having lost so good and glorious a master.

**Verse 13. *He took-the mantle*** The same with which he had been called by Elijah to the prophetic office, and the same by which Elijah divided Jordan. His having the mantle was a proof that he was invested with the authority and influence of his master.

**Verse 14. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?*** The Vulgate gives a strange turn to this verse: Et percussit aquas, et non sunt divisae; et dixit, Ubi est Deus Eliae etiam nunc? Percussitque aquas, et divisae sunt huc et illuc. “And he smote the waters, but they did not divide; and he said, Where is the God of Elijah even now? And he struck the waters and they were divided hither and thither.” The act of striking the waters seems to be twice repeated in the verse, though we get rid of the second striking by rendering the second clause, when he also had smitten the waters: which has the same Hebrew words as the first, and which we translate, he smote the waters. The Vulgate supposes he smote once in vain, perhaps confiding too much in his own strength; and then, having invoked the God of Elijah, he succeeded. This distinction is not followed by any of the other versions; nor is the clause, et non sunt divisae, “and they divided not,” expressed by the Hebrew text.

**Verse 15. *The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.*** This was a natural conclusion, from seeing him with the mantle, and working the same miracle. This disposed them to yield the same obedience to him they had



done to his master: and in token of this, they went out to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

**Verse 16. *Fifty strong men*** Probably the same fifty who are mentioned 2 Kings 2:7, and who saw Elijah taken up in the whirlwind.

***Cast him upon some mountain*** Though they saw him taken up towards heaven, yet they thought it possible that the Spirit of the Lord might have descended with him, and left him on some remote mountain or valley.

***Ye shall not send.*** He knew that he was translated to heaven, and that therefore it would be useless.

**Verse 17. *Till he was ashamed*** He saw they would not be satisfied unless they made the proposed search; he felt therefore that he could not, with any good grace, resist their importunity any longer.

**Verse 19. *The water is naught, and the ground barren.*** The barrenness of the ground was the effect of the badness of the water.

**Verse 21. *And cast the salt in there*** He cast in the salt at the place where the waters sprang out of the earth. Jarchi well observes here, "Salt is a thing which corrupts water; therefore, it is evident that this was a true miracle." What Elisha did on this occasion, getting the new cruse and throwing in the salt, was only to make the miracle more conspicuous. If the salt could have had any natural tendency to render the water salubrious, it could have acted only for a short time, and only on that portion of the stream which now arose from the spring; and in a few moments its effects must have disappeared. But the miracle here was permanent: the death of men and cattle, which had been occasioned by the insalubrity of the waters, ceased, the land was no longer barren; and the waters became permanently fit for all agricultural and domestic uses.

**Verse 23. *There came forth little children out of the city*** These were probably the school of some celebrated teacher; but under his instruction they had learned neither piety nor good manners.

***Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.*** עלה קרח עלה קרח aleh kereach, aleh kereach. Does not this imply the grossest insult? Ascend, thou empty skull, to heaven, as it is pretended thy master did!

This was blasphemy against God; and their punishment (for they were Beth-elite idolaters) was only proportioned to their guilt. Elisha cursed them, i.e., pronounced a curse upon them, in the name of the Lord, יהוה בִּשְׁמֵם beshem Yehovah, by the name or authority of Jehovah. The spirit of their offense lies in their ridiculing a miracle of the Lord: the offense was against Him, and He punished it. It was no petulant humor of the prophet that caused him to pronounce this curse; it was God alone: had it proceeded from a wrong disposition of the prophet, no miracle would have been wrought in order to gratify it.

“But was it not a cruel thing to destroy forty-two little children, who, in mere childishness, had simply called the prophet bare skull, or bald head?” I answer, Elisha did not destroy them; he had no power by which he could bring two she-bears out of the wood to destroy them. It was evidently either accidental, or a Divine judgment; and if a judgment, God must be the sole author of it. Elisha’s curse must be only declaratory of what God was about to do. See on 2 Kings 1:10. “But then, as they were little children, they could scarcely be accountable for their conduct; and consequently, it was cruelty to destroy them.” If it was a judgment of God, it could neither be cruel nor unjust; and I contend, that the prophet had no power by which he could bring these she-bears to fall upon them. But were they little children? for here the strength of the objection lies. Now I suppose the objection means children from four to seven or eight years old; for so we use the word: but the original, נְעָרִים קְטַנִּים nearim ketannim, may mean young men, for קָטַן katon signifies to be young, in opposition to old, and is so translated in various places in our Bible; and נֶעֱרַן naar signifies, not only a child, but a young man, a servant, or even a soldier, or one fit to go out to battle; and is so translated in a multitude of places in our common English version. I shall mention but a few, because they are sufficiently decisive: Isaac was called נֶעֱרַן naar when twenty-eight years old, Genesis 21:5-12; and Joseph was so called when he was thirty-nine, Genesis 41:12. Add to these 1 Kings 20:14: “And Ahab said, By whom [shall the Assyrians be delivered into my hand?] And he said, Thus saith the Lord, by the YOUNG MEN, בְּנֵעָרֵי benaarey, of the princes of the provinces.” That these were soldiers, probably militia, or a selection from the militia, which served as a bodyguard to Ahab, the event sufficiently

declares; and the persons that mocked Elisha were perfectly accountable for their conduct.

But is it not possible that these forty-two were a set of unlucky young men, who had been employed in the wood, destroying the whelps of these same she-bears, who now pursued them, and tore them to pieces, for the injury they had done? We have already heard of the ferocity of a bear robbed of her whelps; see at the end of 2 Samuel 17:28. The mention of SHE-bears gives some color to the above conjecture; and, probably, at the time when these young fellows insulted the prophet, the bears might be tracing the footsteps of the murderers of their young, and thus came upon them in the midst of their insults, God's providence ordering these occurrences so as to make this natural effect appear as a Divine cause. If the conjecture be correct, the bears were prepared by their loss to execute the curse of the prophet, and God's justice guided them to the spot to punish the iniquity that had been just committed.

## CHAPTER 3

*The reign and idolatry of Jehoram, king of Israel, 1-3. Mesha, king of Moab, rebels against Israel, 4, 5. Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom join against the Moabites, and are brought into great distress for want of water, 6-10. The three kings go to Elisha to inquire of the Lord; who promises them water, and a complete victory, 11-19. Water comes the next morning, and fills the trenches which these kings had made in the valley, 20. The Moabites arm against them; and suppose, when they see the sun shining upon the waters, which look like blood, that the confederate kings have fallen out, and slain each other; and that they have nothing to do but take the spoil, 21-23. The Israelites attack and completely rout them, beat down their cities, and mar their land, 24, 25. The king of Moab, having made an unsuccessful attack on the king of Edom, takes his eldest son, and offers him for a burnt-offering upon the wall; and there is great indignation against Israel, 26, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 2. *He put away the image of Baal*** He abolished his worship; but he continued that of the calves at Dan and Beth-el.

**Verse 4. *Was a sheepmaster*** The original Is נקד naked, of which the Septuagint could make nothing, and therefore retained the Hebrew word **νοκηδ**: but the Chaldee has **מַרִי גִיתִי** marey githey, “a sheepmaster;” Aquila has **ποιμνιοτροφος**; and Symmachus, **τρεφων βοσκηματα**; all to the same sense. The original signifies one who marks or brands, probably from the marking of sheep. He fed many sheep, etc., and had them all marked in a particular way, in order to ascertain his property.

***A hundred thousand lambs*** The Chaldee and Arabic have a hundred thousand fat oxen.

**Verse 7. *My people as thy people*** We find that Jehoshaphat maintained the same friendly intercourse with the son, as he did with the father. See 1 Kings 22:4.

**Verse 8. *Through the wilderness of Edom.*** Because he expected the king of Edom to join them, as we find he did; for, being tributary to Judah, he was obliged to do it.

**Verse 9. *A compass of seven days' journey*** By taking a circuitous route, to go round the southern part of the Dead Sea, they probably intended to surprise the Moabites; but it appears their journey was ill planned, as they at last got into a country in which it was impossible to obtain water, and they were brought in consequence to the utmost extremity.

**Verse 10. *The Lord hath called these three kings together*** That is, This is a Divine judgment; God has judicially blinded us, and permitted us to take this journey to our destruction.

**Verse 11. *Is there not here a prophet of the Lord*** The kings of Judah still acknowledged the true God, and him only.

***Poured water on the hands of Elijah*** That is, was his constant and confidential servant.

**Verse 12. *The word of the Lord is with him.*** He has the gift of prophecy.

**Verse 13. *Get thee to the prophets of thy father*** This was a just, but cutting reproof.

***Nay*** The Chaldee adds here, I beseech thee, do not call the sins of this impiety to remembrance, but ask mercy for us; because the Lord hath called, etc. The Arabic has, I beseech thee, do not mention of our transgressions, but use kindness towards us. It is very likely that some such words were spoken on the occasion; but these are the only versions which make this addition.

**Verse 14. *Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat*** He worshipped the true God; Jehoram was an idolater.

**Verse 15. *Bring me a minstrel.*** A person who played on the harp. The rabbins, and many Christians, suppose that Elisha's mind was considerably irritated and grieved by the bad behavior of the young men at

Beth-el, and their tragical end, and by the presence of the idolatrous king of Israel; and therefore called for Divine psalmody, that it might calm his spirits, and render him more susceptible of the prophetic influence. To be able to discern the voice of God, and the operation of his hand, it is necessary that the mind be calm, and the passions all in harmony, under the direction of reason; that reason may be under the influence of the Divine Spirit.

***The hand of the Lord came upon him.*** The playing of the harper had the desired effect; his mind was calmed, and the power of God descended upon him. This effect of music was generally acknowledged in every civilized nation. Cicero, in his Tusculan Questions, lib. iv., says, that “the Pythagoreans were accustomed to calm their minds, and soothe their passions, by singing and playing upon the harp.” Pythagoraei mentes suas a cogitationum intentione cantu fidibusque ad tranquillitatem traducebant. I have spoken elsewhere of the heathen priests who endeavored to imitate the true prophets, and were as actually filled with the devil as the others were with the true God. The former were thrown into violent agitations and contortions by the influence of the demons which possessed them, while the latter were in a state of the utmost serenity and composure.

**Verse 16. *Make this valley full of ditches.*** The word נַחַל nachal may be translated brook, as it is by the Vulgate and Septuagint. There probably was a river here, but it was now dry; and the prophet desires that they would enlarge the channel, and cut out various canals from it, and reservoirs, where water might be collected for the refreshment of the army and of the cattle; and these were to be made so wide that the reflection of the sun’s rays from this water might be the means of confounding and destroying the Moabites.

**Verse 17. *Ye shall not see wind*** There shall be no wind to collect vapours, and there shall be no showers, and yet the whole bed of this river, and all the new made canals, shall be filled with water.

**Verse 19. *Shall fell every good tree*** Every tree by which your enemies may serve themselves for fortifications, etc. But surely fruit trees are not intended here; for this was positively against the law of God, Deuteronomy 20:19, 20: “When thou shalt besiege a city-thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof-for the tree of the field is man’s life-only the

trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down.”

***Stop all wells of water*** In those hot countries this would lead sooner than any thing else to reduce an enemy.

enemies, whom he found on the eve of gaining possession of the city, he made a desperate sortie in order to regain the open country; and supposing that the quarter of the Edomites was weakest, or less carefully guarded, he endeavored to make his impression there; but they were so warmly received by the king of Edom that they failed in the attempt, and were driven back into the city. Hence he was led to that desperate act mentioned in the following verse.

**Verse 27. Took his eldest son** The rabbins account for this horrible sacrifice in the following way:—

When the king of Moab found himself so harassed, and the royal city on the point of being taken, he called a council of his servants, and asked them how it was these Israelites could perform such prodigies, and that such miracles were wrought for them? His servants answered, that it was owing to their progenitor Abraham, who, having an only son, was commanded by Jehovah to offer him in sacrifice. Abraham instantly obeyed, and offered his only son for a burnt-offering; and the Israelites being his descendants, through his merits the holy blessed God wrought such miracles in their behalf. The king of Moab answered, I also have an only son, and I will go and offer him to my God. Then he offered him for a burnt-offering upon the wall.

**Upon the wall** על החמה al hachamah. Rab. Sol. Jarchi says that the letter ו vau is wanting in this word, as it should be written חומה chomah, to signify a wall; but חמה chammah signifies the sun, and this was the god of the king of Moab: “And he offered his first-born son for a burnt-offering unto the sun.” This is not very solid.

**There was great indignation** The Lord was displeased with them for driving things to such an extremity: or the surrounding nations held them in abomination on the account; and they were so terrified themselves at this most horrid sacrifice, that they immediately raised the siege and departed. In cases of great extremity it was customary in various heathen nations to offer human sacrifices, or to devote to the infernal gods the most precious or excellent thing or person they possessed. This was frequent among the Phoenicians, Romans, and Greeks; and it was the natural fruit of a religious system which had for the objects of its worship cruel and merciless



divinities. How different the Christian system! “Wilt thou that we shall bring down fire from heaven and destroy them? Ye know not what manner of spirits ye are of; the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

## CHAPTER 4

*A widow of one of the prophets, oppressed by a merciless creditor, applies to Elisha, who multiplies her oil; by a part of which she pays her debt, and subsists on the rest, 1-7. His entertainment at the house of a respectable woman in Shunem, 8-10. He foretells to his hostess the birth of a son, 11-17. After some years the child dies, and the mother goes to Elisha at Carmel; he comes to Shunem, and raises the child to life, 18-37. He comes to Gilgal, and prevents the sons of the prophets from being poisoned by wild gourds, 38-41. He multiplies a scanty provision, so as to make it sufficient to feed one hundred men, 42-44.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1. *Now there cried a certain woman*** This woman, according to the Chaldee, Jarchi, and the rabbins, was the wife of Obadiah.

***Sons of the prophets*** תלמידי נבייא talmidey nebiyaiya, “disciples of the prophets:” so the Targum here, and in all other places where the words occur, and properly too.

***The creditor is come*** This, says Jarchi, was Jehoram son of Ahab, who lent money on usury to Obadiah, because he had in the days of Ahab fed the Lord’s prophets. The Targum says he borrowed money to feed these prophets, because he would not support them out of the property of Ahab.

***To take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.*** Children, according to the laws of the Hebrews, were considered the property of their parents, who had a right to dispose of them for the payment of their debts. And in cases of poverty, the law permitted them, expressly, to sell both themselves and their children; Exodus 21:7, and Leviticus 25:39. It was by an extension of this law, and by virtue of another, which authorized them to sell the thief who could not make restitution, Exodus 22:3, that creditors were permitted to take the children of their debtors in payment. Although the law has not determined any thing precisely on this point, we see by this

passage, and by several others, that this custom was common among the Hebrews. Isaiah refers to it very evidently, where he says, Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves; Isaiah 50:1. And our Lord alludes to it, Matthew 18:25, where he mentions the case of an insolvent debtor, Forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded HIM to be SOLD, and his WIFE and CHILDREN, and all that he had; which shows that the custom continued among the Jews to the very end of their republic. The Romans, Athenians, and Asiatics in general had the same authority over their children as the Hebrews had: they sold them in time of poverty; and their creditors seized them as they would a sheep or an ox, or any household goods. Romulus gave the Romans an absolute power over their children which extended through the whole course of their lives, let them be in whatever situation they might. They could cast them into prison, beat, employ them as slaves in agriculture, sell them for slaves, or even take away their lives! — Dionys. Halicarn. lib. ii., pp. 96, 97.

Numa Pompilius first moderated this law, by enacting, that if a son married with the consent of his father, he should no longer have power to sell him for debt.

The emperors Diocletian and Maximilian forbade freemen to be sold on account of debt: *Obidiah aes alienum servire liberos creditoribus, jura non patiuntur.* — Vid. Lib. ob. aes C. de obligat. The ancient Athenians had the same right over their children as the Romans; but Solon reformed this barbarous custom. — Vid. Plutarch in Solone.

The people of Asia had the same custom, which Lucullus endeavored to check, by moderating the laws respecting usury.

The Georgians may alienate their children; and their creditors have a right to sell the wives and children of their debtors, and thus exact the uttermost farthing of their debt. — Tavernier, lib. iii., c. 9. And we have reason to believe that this custom long prevailed among the inhabitants of the British isles. See Calmet here.

In short, it appears to have been the custom of all the inhabitants of the earth. We have some remains of it yet in this country, in the senseless and pernicious custom of throwing a man into prison for debt, though his own

industry and labor be absolutely necessary to discharge it, and these cannot be exercised within the loathsome and contagious walls of a prison.

**Verse 2. *Save a pot of oil.*** Oil was used as aliment, for anointing the body after bathing, and to anoint the dead. Some think that this pot of oil was what this widow had kept for her burial: see Matthew 26:12.

**Verse 6. *And the oil stayed.*** While there was a vessel to fill, there was oil sufficient; and it only ceased to flow when there was no vessel to receive it. This is a good emblem of the grace of God. While there is an empty, longing heart, there is a continual overflowing fountain of salvation. If we find in any place or at any time that the oil ceases to flow, it is because there are no empty vessels there, no souls hungering and thirsting for righteousness. We find fault with the dispensations of God's mercy, and ask, Why were the former days better than these? Were we as much in earnest for our salvation as our forefathers were for theirs, we should have equal supplies, and as much reason to sing aloud of Divine mercy.

**Verse 7. *Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt*** He does not inveigh against the cruelty of this creditor, because the law and custom of the country gave him the authority on which he acted; and rather than permit a poor honest widow to have her children sold, or that even a Philistine should suffer loss who had given credit to a genuine Israelite, he would work a miracle to pay a debt which, in the course of providence, it was out of her power to discharge.

**Verse 8. *Elisha passed to Shunem*** This city was in the tribe of Issachar, to the south of the brook Kishon, and at the foot of Mount Tabor.

***Where was a great woman*** In Pirkey Rab. Eliezer, this woman is said to have been the sister of Abishag, the Shunammite, well known in the history of David.

Instead of great woman, the Chaldee has, a woman fearing sin; the Arabic, a woman eminent for piety before God. This made her truly great.

**Verse 9. *This is a holy man of God*** That is, a prophet, as the Chaldee interprets it.

***Which passeth by us continually.*** It probably lay in his way to some school of the prophets that he usually attended.

**Verse 10. *Let us make a little chamber*** See the note upon Judges 3:20. As the woman was convinced that Elisha was a prophet, she knew that he must have need of more privacy than the general state of her house could afford; and therefore she proposes what she knew would be a great acquisition to him, as he could live in this little chamber in as much privacy as if he were in his own house. The bed, the table, the stool, and the candlestick, were really every thing he could need, by way of accommodation, in such circumstances.

**Verse 12. *Gehazi his servant*** This is the first time we hear of this very indifferent character.

**Verse 13. *Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king*** Elisha must have had considerable influence with the king, from the part he took in the late war with the Moabites. Jehoram had reason to believe that the prophet, under God, was the sole cause of his success, and therefore he could have no doubt that the king would grant him any reasonable request.

***Or to the captain of the host?*** As if he had said, Wilt thou that I should procure thee and thy husband a place at court, or get any of thy friends a post in the army?

***I dwell among mine own people.*** I am perfectly satisfied and contented with my lot in life; I live on the best terms with my neighbors, and am here encompassed with my kindred, and feel no disposition to change my connections or place of abode.

How few are there like this woman on the earth! Who would not wish to be recommended to the king's notice, or get a post for a relative in the army, etc.? Who would not like to change the country for the town, and the rough manners of the inhabitants of the villages for the polished conversation and amusements of the court? Who is so contented with what he has as not to desire more? Who trembles at the prospect of riches; or believes there are any snares in an elevated state, or in the company and conversation of the great and honorable? How few are there that will not sacrifice every thing—peace, domestic comfort, their friends, their conscience, and their God—for money, honors, grandeur, and parade?

**Verse 14.** *What then is to be done for her?* It seems that the woman retired as soon as she had delivered the answer mentioned in the preceding verse.

**Verse 16.** *Thou shalt embrace*

**Verse 26. *It is well.*** How strong was her faith in God and submission to his authority! Though the heaviest family affliction that could befall her and her husband had now taken place; yet, believing that it was a dispensation of Providence which was in itself neither unwise nor unkind, she said, It is well with me, with my husband, and with my child. We may farther remark that, in her days, the doctrine of reprobate infants had not disgraced the pure religion of the God of endless compassion. She had no doubts concerning the welfare of her child, even with respect to another world; and who but a pagan or a stoic can entertain a contrary doctrine?

**Verse 27. *The Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.*** In reference to this point he had not now the discernment of spirits. This, and the gift of prophecy, were influences which God gave and suspended as his infinite wisdom saw good.

**Verse 28. *Did I desire a son of my lord?*** I expressed no such wish to thee; I was contented and happy; and when thou didst promise me a son, did I not say, Do not deceive me? Do not mock me with a child which shall grow up to be attractive and engaging, but of whom I shall soon be deprived by death.

**Verse 29. *Salute him not*** Make all the haste thou possibly canst, and lay my staff on the face of the child; he probably thought that it might be a case of mere suspended animation or a swoon, and that laying the staff on the face of the child might act as a stimulus to excite the animal motions.

**Verse 30. *I will not leave thee.*** The prophet it seems had no design to accompany her; he intended to wait for Gehazi's return; but as the woman was well assured the child was dead, she was determined not to return till she brought the prophet with her.

**Verse 32. *Behold, the child was dead*** The prophet then saw that the body and spirit of the child were separated.

**Verse 33. *Prayed unto the Lord.*** He had no power of his own by which he could restore the child.

**Verse 34. *Lay upon the child*** Endeavored to convey a portion of his own natural warmth to the body of the child; and probably endeavored, by blowing into the child's mouth, to inflate the lungs, and restore respiration.

He uses every natural means in his power to restore life, while praying to the Author of it to exert a miraculous influence. Natural means are in our power; those that are supernatural belong to God. We should always do our own work, and beg of God to do his.

**Verse 35. *The child sneezed seven times*** That is, it sneezed abundantly. When the nervous influence began to act on the muscular system, before the circulation could be in every part restored, particular muscles, if not the whole body, would be thrown into strong contractions and shiverings, and sternutation or sneezing would be a natural consequence; particularly as obstructions must have taken place in the head and its vessels, because of the disorder of which the child died. Most people, as well as philosophers and physicians, have remarked how beneficial sneezings are to the removal of obstructions in the head. Sternutamenta, says Pliny, Hist. Nat., lib. xxviii., cap. 6, *gravedinem capitis emendant*; “Sneezing relieves disorders of the head.”

**Verse 37. *She went in and fell at his feet*** Few can enter into the feelings of this noble woman. What suspense must she have felt during the time that the prophet was employed in the slow process referred to above! for slow in its own nature it must have been, and exceedingly exhausting to the prophet himself.

**Verse 38. *Came again to Gilgal*** He had been there before with his master, a short time prior to his translation.

***Set on the great pot and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.*** It was in a time of dearth, and all might now stand in need of refreshment; and it appears that the prophet was led to put forth the power he had from God to make a plentiful provision for those who were present. The father of the celebrated Dr. Young, author of the Night Thoughts, preaching a charity sermon for the benefit of the sons of the clergy, took the above words for his text; nor could they be said to be inappropriate.

**Verse 39. *Wild gourds*** This is generally thought to be the *coloquintida*, the fruit of a plant of the same name, about the size of a large orange. It is brought hither from the Levant, and is often known by the name of the bitter apple; both the seeds and pulp are intensely bitter, and violently



purgative. It ranks among vegetable poisons, as all intense bitters do; but, judiciously employed, it is of considerable use in medicine.

**Verse 40. *There is death in the pot.*** As if they had said, “We have here a deadly mixture; if we eat of it, we shall all die.”

**Verse 41. *Bring meal.*** Though this might, in some measure, correct the strong acrid and purgative quality; yet it was only a miracle which could make a lapful of this fruit shred into pottage salutary.

**Verse 42. *Bread of the first-fruits*** This was an offering to the prophet, as the first-fruits themselves were an offering to God.

***Corn in the husk*** Probably parched corn or corn to be parched, a very frequent food in the East; full ears, before they are ripe, parched on the fire.

**Verse 43. *Thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.*** It was God, not the prophet, who fed one hundred men with these twenty loaves, etc. This is something like our Lord’s feeding the multitude miraculously. Indeed, there are many things in this chapter similar to facts in our Lord’s history: and this prophet might be more aptly considered a type of our Lord, than most of the other persons in the Scriptures who have been thus honored.

## CHAPTER 5

*The history of Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, a leper; who was informed by a little Israelitish captive maid that a prophet of the Lord, in Samaria, could cure him, 1-4. The king of Syria sends him, with a letter and rich presents, to the king of Israel, that he should recover him of his leprosy, 5, 6. On receiving the letter, the king of Israel is greatly distressed, supposing that the Syrian king designed to seek a quarrel with him; in desiring him to cleanse a leper, when it was well known that none could cure that disorder but God, 7. Elisha, hearing this, orders Naaman to be sent to him, 8. He comes to Elisha's house in great state, 9. And the prophet sends a messenger to him, ordering him to wash in Jordan seven times, and he should be made clean, 10. Naaman is displeased that he is received with so little ceremony, and departs in a rage, 11, 12. His servants reason with him; he is persuaded, goes to Jordan, washes, and is made clean, 13, 14. He returns to Elisha; acknowledges the true God; and offers him a present, which the prophet refuses, 15, 16. He asks directions, promises never to sacrifice to any other god, and is dismissed, 17-19. Gehazi runs after him, pretends he is sent by his master for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment; which he receives, brings home, and hides, 20-24. Elisha questions him; convicts him of his wickedness; pronounces a curse of leprosy upon him, with which he is immediately afflicted; and departs from his master a leper, as white as snow, 25-27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1.** *Naaman, captain of the host* Of Naaman we know nothing more than is related here. Jarchi and some others say that he was the man who drew the bow at a venture, as we term it, and slew Ahab: see 1 Kings 22:34, and the notes there. He is not mentioned by Josephus, nor has he any reference to this history; which is very strange, as it exists in the Chaldee, Septuagint, and Syriac.

**King of Syria** The Hebrew is מֶלֶךְ אֲרָם melech Aram, king of Aram; which is followed by the Chaldee and Arabic. The Syriac has (Syriac) Adom; but as the Syriac (Syriac) dolath is the same element as the Syriac (Syriac) rish, differing only in the position of the diacritic point, it may have been originally Aram. The Septuagint and Vulgate have Syria, and this is a common meaning of the term in Scripture. If the king of Syria be meant, it must be Ben-hadad; and the contemporary king of Israel was Jehoram.

**A great man** He was held in the highest esteem.

**And honorable** Had the peculiar favor and confidence of his master; and was promoted to the highest trusts.

**Had given deliverance unto Syria** That is, as the rabbins state, by his slaying Ahab, king of Israel; in consequence of which the Syrians got the victory.

**A mighty man in valor** He was a giant, and very strong, according to the Arabic. He had, in a word, all the qualifications of an able general.

**But he was a leper.** Here was a heavy tax upon his grandeur; he was afflicted with a disorder the most loathsome and the most humiliating that could possibly disgrace a human being. God often, in the course of his providence, permits great defects to be associated with great eminence, that he may hide pride from man; and cause him to think soberly of himself and his acquirements.

**Verse 2. The Syrians had gone out by companies** גְּדוּדִים gedudim, troops. When one hundred or two hundred men go out by themselves to make prey of whatever they can get, that is called, says Jarchi, גְּדוּד gedud, a troop. They had gone out in marauding parties; and on such occasions they bring away grain, cattle, and such of the inhabitants as are proper to make slaves.

**A little maid** Who, it appears, had pious parents, who brought her up in the knowledge of the true God. Behold the goodness and the severity of the Divine providence! affectionate parents are deprived of their promising daughter by a set of lawless freebooters, without the smallest prospect that she should have any lot in life but that of misery, infamy, and wo.

***Waited on Naaman's wife.*** Her decent orderly behavior, the consequence of her sober and pious education, entitled her to this place of distinction; in which her servitude was at least easy, and her person safe.

If God permitted the parents to be deprived of their pious child by the hands of ruffians, he did not permit the child to be without a guardian. In such a case, were even the father and mother to forsake her, God would take her up.

**Verse 3. *Would God my lord*** אֲחֵלֵי achaley, I wish; or, as the Chaldee, Syrian, and Arabic have, “Happy would it be for my master if he were with the prophet,” etc.

Here the mystery of the Divine providence begins to develop itself. By the captivity of this little maid, one Syrian family at least, and that one of the most considerable in the Syrian empire, is brought to the knowledge of the true God.

**Verse 4. *Thus and thus said the maid*** So well had this little pious maid conducted herself, that her words are credited; and credited so fully, that an embassy from the king of Syria to the king of Israel is founded upon them!

**Verse 5. *The king of Syria said*** He judged it the best mode of proceeding to send immediately to the king, under whose control he supposed the prophet must be, that he would order the prophet to cure his general.

***Ten talents of silver*** This, at ú353 11s. 10 1/2d. the talent, would amount to ú3, 535 18s. 9d.

***Six thousand pieces of gold*** If shekels are here meant, as the Arabic has

both countries; and in both equally incurable. See the notes on Leviticus 13 and 14. And it was this that led the king of Israel to infer that the Syrian king sought a quarrel with him, in desiring him to do a work which God only could do; and then declaring war upon him because he did not do it.

**Verse 8. *Let him come now to me*** Do not be afflicted; the matter belongs to me, as the prophet of the Most High; send him to me, and he shall know that I am such.

**Verse 9. *Came with his horses and with his chariot*** In very great pomp and state. Closely inspected, this was preposterous enough; a leper sitting in state, and affecting it!

**Verse 10. *Sent a messenger*** Did not come out to speak with him: he had got his orders from God, and he transmitted them to Naaman by his servant.

***Wash in Jordan seven times*** The waters of Jordan had no tendency to remove this disorder but God chose to make them the means by which he would convey his healing power. He who is the author of life, health, and salvation, has a right to dispense, convey, and maintain them, by whatsoever means he pleases.

**Verse 11. *Naaman was wroth*** And why? Because the prophet treated him without ceremony; and because he appointed him an expenseless and simple mode of cure.

***Behold, I thought*** God's ways are not as our ways; he appoints that mode of cure which he knows to be best. Naaman expected to be treated with great ceremony; and instead of humbling himself before the Lord's prophet, he expected the prophet of the Lord to humble himself before him! Behold I thought;-and what did he think? Hear his words, for they are all very emphatic:-1. "I thought, He will surely come OUT to ME. He will never make his servant the medium of communication between ME and himself. 2. And stand-present himself before me, and stand as a servant to hear the orders of his God. 3. And call on the name of Jehovah HIS God; so that both his God and himself shall appear to do me service and honor. 4. And strike his hand over the place; for can it be supposed that any healing virtue can be conveyed without contact? Had he done these things, then the leper might have been recovered."

**Verse 12. *Are not Abana and Pharpar*** At present these rivers do not exist by these names; and where they are we know not; nor whether they were the Orontes and Chrysorroes. Mr. Maundrell, who traveled over all this ground, could find no vestige of the names Abana and Pharpar. The river Barrady he accurately describes: it has its source in Antilibanus; and, after having plentifully watered the city of Damascus and the gardens, dividing into three branches, (one of which goes through the city, and the two others are distributed among the gardens,) it is lost in the marshy country about five or six leagues from Damascus. Two of these branches were doubtless called in the time of Elisha Abana, or Amana, as many copies have it; and Pharpar. And in the time in which the Arabic version was made, one of these branches were called (Arabic) Barda and Toura, for these are the names by which this version translates those of the text.

***May I not wash in them, and be clean?*** No, for God has directed thee to Jordan! and by its waters, or none, shalt thou be cleansed. Abana and Pharpar may be as good as Jordan; and in respect to thy cleansing, the simple difference is, God will convey his influence by the latter, and not by the former.

There is often contention among the people of Bengal and other places, concerning the superior efficacy of rivers; though the Ganges bears the bell in Bengal, as the Thames does in England, and the Nile in Egypt.

**Verse 13. *My father*** A title of the highest respect and affection.

***Had bid thee do some great thing*** If the prophet had appointed thee to do something very difficult in itself, and very expensive to thee, wouldst thou not have done it? With much greater reason shouldst thou do what will occupy little time, be no expense, and is easy to be performed.

**Verse 14. *Then went he down*** He felt the force of this reasoning, and made a trial, probably expecting little success.

***Like unto the flesh of a little child*** The loathsome scurf was now entirely removed; his flesh assumed the appearance and health of youth; and the whole mass of his blood, and other juices, became purified, refined, and exalted! How mighty is God! What great things can he do by the simplest and feeblest of means!

**Verse 15. *He returned to the man of God*** He saw that the hand of the Lord was upon him; he felt gratitude for his cleansing; and came back to acknowledge, in the most public way, his obligation to God and his servant.

***Stood before him*** He was now truly humbled, and left all his state behind him. It is often the case that those who have least to value themselves on are proud and haughty; whereas the most excellent of the earth are the most humble, knowing that they have nothing but what they have received. Naaman, the leper, was more proud and dictatorial than he was when cleansed of his leprosy.

***There is no God in all the earth*** Those termed gods are no gods; the God of Israel is sole God in all the earth. See my sermon on this subject.

***Take a blessing*** Accept a present. Take an expiatory gift. — Arabic. He desired to offer something for his cleansing. He thought it right thus to acknowledge the hand from which he had received his healing, and thus honor the Lord by giving something to his servant.

**Verse 16. *I will receive none.*** It was very common to give presents to all great and official men; and among these, prophets were always included: but as it might have appeared to the Syrians that he had taken the offered presents as a remuneration for the cure performed, he refused; for as God alone did the work, he alone should have all the glory.

**Verse 17. *Shall there not then, I pray thee*** This verse is understood two different ways. I will give them both in a paraphrase:—

1. ***Shall there not then be given unto thy servant [viz., Naaman]*** two mules' burden of this Israelitish earth, that I may build an altar with it, on which I may offer sacrifices to the God of Israel? For thy servant, etc.

2. Shall there not be given to thy [Elisha's] servant [Gehazi] two mules' burden of this earth? i.e., the gold and silver which he brought with him; and which he esteemed as earth, or dust, in comparison of the cure he received. For thy servant [Naaman] will henceforth, etc.

Each of these interpretations has its difficulties. Why Naaman should ask for two mules' burden of earth, which he might have taken up any where on the confines of the land, without any such liberty, is not easy to see.

As to the prophet's permission, though the boon was ever so small, it was not his to give; only the king of Israel could give such a permission: and what sort of an altar could he build with two mules' burden of earth, carried from Samaria to Damascus? If this be really the meaning of the place, the request was exceedingly foolish, and never could have come from a person enjoying the right use of his reason. The second opinion, not without its difficulties, seems less embarrassed than the former. It was natural for Naaman to wish to give something to the prophet's servant, as the master had refused his present. Again, impressed with the vast importance of the cure he had received, to take away all feeling of obligation, he might call two or ten talents of silver by the name of earth, as well as Habakkuk, Habakkuk 2:6, calls silver and gold thick clay; and by terms of this kind it has been frequently denominated, both by prophets and heathen writers: "Tyrus heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets;" Zechariah 9:3. And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as stones; 2 Chronicles 1:15. Which is agreeable to the sentiments of the heathen: χρυσος τις κονις εστι, και αργυρος, Gold and silver are only a certain kind of earth. — ARIST. Eth. Nicomach.

Should it be said, The gold and silver could not be two mules' burden; I answer, Let the quantity that Naaman brought with him be only considered, and it will be found to be as much, when put into two bags, as could be well lifted upon the backs of two mules, or as those beasts could conveniently carry. The silver itself would weigh 233lbs. 9oz. 15 1/2dwts., and the gold 1, 140lbs. 7oz. 10dwts.; in the whole 1, 374lbs. 50Z. 5 1/2dwts. Troy weight. Should it be objected that, taken in this sense, there is no visible connection between the former and latter clauses of the verse, I answer that there is as much connection between the words taken in this sense as in the other, for something must be brought in to supply both; besides, this makes a more complete sense than the other: "Shall there not, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of this silver and gold, [to apply it as he may think proper; I regard it not,] for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, [for the cure he has now received; or by way of worship at any time,] but unto Jehovah." The reader may choose which of these interpretations he pleases.



**Verse 18. *In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant*** It is useless to enter into the controversy concerning this verse. By no rule of right reasoning, nor by any legitimate mode of interpretation, can it be stated that Naaman is asking pardon for offenses which he may commit, or that he could ask or the prophet grant indulgence to bow himself in the temple of Rimmon, thus performing a decided act of homage, the very essence of that worship which immediately before he solemnly assured the prophet he would never practice. The original may legitimately be read, and ought to be read, in the past, and not in the future tense. “For this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, for that when my master HATH GONE into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he HATH LEANED upon mine hand, that I also HAVE BOWED myself in the house of Rimmon; for my worshipping in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.” This is the translation of Dr. Lightfoot, the most able Hebraist of his time in Christendom.

To admit the common interpretation is to admit, in effect, the doctrine of indulgences; and that we may do evil that good may come of it; that the end sanctifies the means; and that for political purposes we may do unlawful acts.

**Verse 19. *And he said unto him*** There is a most singular and important reading in one of Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS., which he numbers 191. It has in the margin ק ל א that is, “read ל lo, not, instead of לו lo, to him.” Now this reading supposes that Naaman did ask permission from the prophet to worship in Rimmon’s temple; to which the prophet answers, No; go in peace: that is, maintain thy holy resolutions, be a consistent worshipper of the true God, and avoid all idolatrous practices. Another MS., No. 383, appears first to have written לו to him, but to have corrected it immediately by inserting an א aleph after the ו vau; and thus, instead of making it לא no, it has made it לוּ lu, which is no word.

**Verse 20. *My master hath spared-this Syrian*** He has neither taken any thing from him for himself, nor permitted him to give any thing to me.

**Verse 21. *He lighted down from the chariot*** He treats even the prophet’s servant with the profoundest respect, alights from his chariot, and goes to meet him.

*Is all well?* **השלום** hashalom; Is it peace, or prosperity?

**Verse 22. And he said שלום** shalom. It is peace; all is right. This was a common mode of address and answer.

**There be come to me from mount Ephraim** There was probably a school of the prophets at this mount.

**Verse 23. He-bound two talents of silver** It required two servants to carry these two talents, for, according to the computation above, each talent was about 120lbs. weight.

**Verse 24. When he came to the tower** The Chaldee, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic understand the word **עפל** ophel, which we translate tower, as signifying a secret, dark, or hiding place. He was doing a deed of darkness, and he sought darkness to conceal it. He no doubt put them in a place little frequented, or one to which few had access besides himself. But the prophet's discerning spirit found him out.

**Verse 26. Went not mine heart with thee** The Chaldee gives this a good turn: By the prophetic spirit it was shown unto me, when the man returned from his chariot to meet thee.

**Is it a time to receive money** He gave him farther proof of this all-discerning prophetic spirit in telling him what he designed to do with the money; he intended to set up a splendid establishment, to have men-servants and maid-servants, to have oliveyards and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, This, as the Chaldee says, he had thought in his heart to do.

**Verse 27. The leprosy of Naaman-shall cleave unto thee** Thou hast got much money, and thou shalt have much to do with it. Thou hast got Naaman's silver, and thou shalt have Naaman's leprosy. Gehazi is not the last who has got money in an unlawful way, and has got God's curse with it.

**A leper as white as snow.** The moment the curse was pronounced, that moment the signs of the leprosy began to appear. The white shining spot was the sign that the infection had taken place. See on Leviticus 13:2, and the notes at the end of that chapter. {Leviticus 13:58}

1. SOME have thought, because of the prophet's curse, The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and thy seed for ever, that there are persons still alive who are this man's real descendants, and afflicted with this horrible disease. Mr. Maundrell when he was in Judea made diligent inquiry concerning this, but could not ascertain the truth of the supposition. To me it appears absurd; the denunciation took place in the posterity of Gehazi till it should become extinct, and under the influence of this disorder this must soon have taken place. The for ever implies as long as any of his posterity should remain. This is the import of the word לעולם leolam. It takes in the whole extent or duration of the thing to which it is applied. The for ever of Gehazi was till his posterity became extinct.

2. The god Rimmon, mentioned 2 Kings 5:18, we meet with nowhere else in the Scriptures, unless it be the same which Stephen calls Remphan. See Acts 7:43, and the note there. Selden thinks that Rimmon is the same with Elion, a god of the Phoenicians, borrowed undoubtedly from the עליון Elion, the Most High, of the Hebrews, one of the names of the supreme God, which attribute became a god of the Phoenicians. Hesychius has the word ῥαμας Ramas, which he translates ὁ ὑψιστος θεος, the Most High God, which agrees very well with the Hebrew רמון Rimmon, from רמה ramah, to make high or exalt. And all these agree with the sun, as being the highest or most exalted in what is called the solar system. Some think Saturn is intended, and others Venus. Much may be seen on this subject in Selden Deuteronomy Diis Syris.

3. Let us not suppose that the offense of Gehazi was too severely punished. 1. Look at the principle, covetousness. 2. Pride and vanity; he wished to become a great man. 3, His lying, in order to impose on Naaman: Behold even now there be come to me, etc. 4. He in effect sells the cure of Naaman for so much money; for if Naaman had not been cured, could he have pretended to ask the silver and raiment? 5. It was an act of theft; he applied that to his own use which Naaman gave him for his master. 6. He dishonored his master by getting the money and raiment in his name, who had before so solemnly refused it. 7. He closed the whole by lying to his master, denying that he had gone after Naaman, or that he had received any thing from him. But was it not severe to extend the punishment of his

crime to his innocent posterity? I answer, it does not appear that any of Gehazi's children, if he had any prior to this, were smitten with the leprosy; and as to those whom he might beget after this time, their leprosy must be the necessary consequence of their being engendered by a leprous father.

Reader, see the end of avarice and ambition; and see the truth of those words, "He that WILL be rich, shall fall into temptation, and a snare, and into divers hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."  
-St. Paul.

4. We have already remarked the apparently severe and manifestly kind providence of God in this business. 1. A marauding party was permitted to spoil the confines of the land of Israel. 2. They brought away, to reduce to captivity, a little maid, probably the hope of her father's house. 3. She became Naaman's property, and waited on his wife. 4. She announced God and his prophet. 5. Naaman, on the faith of her account, took a journey to Samaria. 6. Gets healed of his leprosy. 7. Is converted to the Lord; and, doubtless, brought at least his whole family to believe to the saving of their souls. What was severe to the parents of the little maid was most kind to Naaman and his family; and the parents lost their child only a little time, that they might again receive her with honor and glory for ever. How true are the words of the poet!

"Behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face."

And see the benefits of a religious education! Had not this little maid been brought up in the knowledge of the true God, she had not been the instrument of so great a salvation. See my sermon on this subject 2 Kings 5:12.

## CHAPTER 6

*The sons of the prophets wish to enlarge their dwelling-place, and go to the banks of Jordan to cut down wood, when one of them drops his axe into the water, which Elisha causes to swim. 1-7. Elisha, understanding all the secret designs of the king of Syria against Israel, informs the king of Israel of them, 8-10. The king of Syria, finding that Elisha had thus penetrated his secrets and frustrated his attempts, sends a great host to Dothan, to take the prophet; the Lord strikes them with blindness; and Elisha leads the whole host to Samaria, and delivers them up to the king of Israel, 11-19. The Lord opens their eyes, and they see their danger, 20. But the king of Israel is prevented from destroying them; and, at the order of the prophet, gives them meat and drink, and dismisses them to their master, 21-23. Ben-hadad besieges Samaria, and reduces the city to great distress, of which several instances are given, 24-30. The king of Israel vows the destruction of Elisha, and sends to have him beheaded, 31-33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1.** *The place-is too strait for us.* Notwithstanding the general profligacy of Israel, the schools of the prophets increased. This was no doubt owing to the influence of Elisha.

**Verse 2.** *Every man a beam* They made a sort of log-houses with their own hands.

**Verse 5.** *Alas, master! for it was borrowed.* אהה אדני והוא שאול ahah adonia, vehu shaul! Ah! ah, my master; and it has been sought. It has fallen in, and I have sought it in vain. Or, it was borrowed, and therefore I am the more afflicted for its loss; and Jarchi adds, I have nothing wherewith to repay it.

**Verse 6.** *He cut down a stick* This had no natural tendency to raise the iron; it was only a sign or ceremony which the prophet chose to use on the occasion.

***The iron did swim.*** This was a real miracle; for the gravity of the metal must have for ever kept it at the bottom of the water,

**Verse 8. *The king of Syria warred against Israel*** This was probably the same Ben-hadad who is mentioned 2 Kings 6:24. What was the real or pretended cause of this war we cannot tell; but we may say, in numberless war cases, as Calmet says in this: “An ambitious and restless prince always finds a sufficiency of reasons to color his enterprises.”

***In such and such a place*** The Syrian king had observed, from the disposition of the Israelitish army, in what direction it was about to make its movements; and therefore laid ambuscades where he might surprise it to the greatest advantage.

**Verse 9. *Beware that thou pass not such a place*** Elisha must have had this information by immediate revelation from heaven.

**Verse 10. *Sent to the place***

chariots of fire were there, before the eyes of Elisha's servant were opened.

**Verse 18. *Smite this people-with blindness*** Confound their sight so that they may not know what they see, and so mistake one place for another.

**Verse 19. *I will bring you to the man whom ye seek.*** And he did so; he was their guide to Samaria, and showed himself to them fully in that city.

**Verse 20. *Open the eyes of these men*** Take away their confusion of vision, that they may discern things as they are, and distinguish where they are.

**Verse 21. *My father, shall I smite*** This was dastardly; the utmost he could have done with these men, when thus brought into his hand, was to make them prisoners of war.

**Verse 22. *Whom thou hast taken captive*** Those who in open battle either lay down their arms, or are surrounded, and have their retreat cut off, are entitled to their lives, much more those who are thus providentially put into thy hand, without having been in actual hostility against thee. Give them meat and drink, and send them home to their master, and let them thus know that thou fearest him not, and art incapable of doing an ungenerous or unmanly action.

**Verse 23. *He prepared great provision for them*** These, on the return to their master, could tell him strange things about the power of the God of Israel, and the magnanimity of its king.

***So the bands of Syria came no more*** Marauding parties were no more permitted by the Syrian king to make inroads upon Israel. And it is very likely that for some considerable time after this, there was no war between these two nations. What is mentioned in the next verse was more than a year afterwards.

**Verse 25. *And, behold, they besieged it*** They had closed it in on every side, and reduced it to the greatest necessity.

***An ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver*** I suppose we are to take the ass's head literally; and if the head sold for so much, what must other parts sell for which were much to be preferred? The famine must be

great that could oblige them to eat any part of an animal that was proscribed by the law; and it must be still greater that could oblige them to purchase so mean a part of this unclean animal at so high a price. The piece of silver was probably the drachm, worth about seven pence three farthings of our money; the whole amounting to about two pounds nine shillings.

**And the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung** The cab was about a quart or three pints. Dove's dung, **חִרְיֹוֹנִים** chiryonim. Whether this means pigeon's dung literally, or a kind of pulse, has been variously disputed by learned men. After having written much upon the subject, illustrated with quotations from east, west, north, and south, I choose to spare my reader the trouble of wading through them, and shall content myself with asserting that it is probable a sort of pease are meant, which the Arabs to this day call by this name. "The garvancos, cicer, or chick pea," says Dr. Shaw, "has been taken for the pigeon's dung, mentioned in the siege of Samaria; and as the cicer is pointed at one end, and acquires an ash color in parching, the first of which circumstances answers to the figure, the second to the usual color of dove's dung, the supposition is by no means to be disregarded."

I should not omit saying that dove's dung is of great value in the East, for its power in producing cucumbers, melons, etc., which has induced many learned men to take the words literally. Bochart has exhausted this subject, and concludes that a kind of pulse is meant. Most learned men are of his opinion.

**Verse 27. If the Lord do not help thee** Some read this as an imprecation, May God save thee not! how can I save thee?

**Verse 29. So we boiled my son** This is horrible; but for the sake of humanity we must allow that the children died through hunger, and then became food for their starved, desperate parents.

**She hath hid her son.** He was already dead, says Jarchi; and she hid him, that she might eat him alone.

This very evil Moses had foretold should come upon them if they forsook God; see Deuteronomy 28:53. 57. The same evil came upon this wretched people when besieged by Nebuchadnezzar; see Ezekiel 5:10. And also



when Titus besieged Jerusalem; see Josephus, Deuteronomy Bell. Judaic. lib. vi., cap. 3, and my notes on Matthew 24:19.

**Verse 30. *He had sackcloth within upon his flesh.*** The king was in deep mourning for the distresses of the people.

**Verse 31. *If the head of Elisha shall stand on him*** Either he attributed these calamities to the prophet, or else he thought he could remove them, and yet would not. The miserable king was driven to desperation.

**Verse 32. *This son of a murderer*** Jehoram, the son of Ahab and Jezebel. But Ahab is called a murderer because of the murder of Naboth.

***Shut the door*** He was obliged to make use of this method for his personal safety, as the king was highly incensed.

***The sound of his master's feet behind him?*** That is, King Jehoram is following his messenger, that he may see him take off my head.

**Verse 33. *Behold, this evil is of the Lord*** It is difficult to know whether it be the prophet, the messenger, or the king, that says these words. It might be the answer of the prophet from within to the messenger who was without, and who sought for admission, and gave his reason; to whom Elisha might have replied: "I am not the cause of these calamities; they are from the Lord; I have been praying for their removal; but why should I pray to the Lord any longer, for the time of your deliverance is at hand?" And then Elisha said,-see the following chapter, where the removal of the calamity is foretold in the most explicit manner; and indeed the chapter is unhappily divided from this. The seventh chapter should have begun with 2 Kings 6:24 of this chapter, as, by the present division, the story is unnaturally interrupted.

How natural is it for men to lay the cause of their suffering on any thing or person but themselves! Ahab's iniquity was sufficient to have brought down God's displeasure on a whole nation; and yet he takes no blame to himself, but lays all on the prophet, who was the only salt that preserved the whole nation from corruption. How few take their sins to themselves! and till they do this, they cannot be true penitents; nor can they expect God's wrath to be averted till they feel themselves the chief of sinners.

## CHAPTER 7

*Elisha foretells abundant relief to the besieged inhabitants of Samaria, 1. One of the lords questions the possibility of it; and is assured that he shall see it on the morrow, but not taste of it, 2. Four lepers, perishing with hunger, go to the camp of the Syrians to seek relief and find it totally deserted, 3-5. How the Syrians were alarmed, and fled, 6, 7. The lepers begin to take the spoil, but at last resolve to carry the good news to the city, 8-11. The king, suspecting some treachery, sends some horsemen to scour the country, and see whether the Syrians are not somewhere concealed; they return, and confirm the report that the Syrians are totally fled, 12-15. The people go out and spoil the camp, in consequence of which provisions become as plentiful as Elisha had foretold, 16. The unbelieving lord, having the charge of the gate committed to him, is trodden to death by the crowd, 17-20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1. *To-morrow about this time*** This was in reply to the desponding language of the king, and to vindicate himself from the charge of being author of this calamity. See the end of the preceding chapter.

***A measure of fine flour-for a shekel*** A seah of fine flour: the seah was about two gallons and a half; the shekel, two shillings and four-pence at the lowest computation. A wide difference between this and the price of the ass's head mentioned above.

**Verse 2. *Then a lord*** שָׁלִישׁ *shalish*. This word, as a name of office, occurs often, and seems to point out one of the highest offices in the state. So unlikely was this prediction to be fulfilled, that he thought God must pour out wheat and barley from heaven before it could have a literal accomplishment.

***But shalt not eat thereof.*** This was a mere prediction of his death, but not as a judgment for his unbelief; any person in his circumstances might have spoken as he did. He stated in effect that nothing but a miracle could

procure the plenty predicted, and by a miracle alone was it done; and any person in his place might have been trodden to death by the crowd in the gate of Samaria.

**Verse 3. *There were four leprous men*** The Gemara in Sota, R. Sol. Jarchi, and others, say that these four lepers were Gehazi and his three sons.

***At the entering in of the gate*** They were not permitted to mingle in civil society.

**Verse 5. *The uttermost part of the camp*** Where the Syrian advanced guards should have been.

**Verse 6. *The Lord had made the-Syrians to hear a noise*** This threw them into confusion; they imagined that they were about to be attacked by powerful auxiliaries, which the king of Israel had hired against them.

**Verse 12. *The king arose in the night*** This king had made a noble defense; he seems to have shared in all the sufferings of the besieged, and to have been ever at his post. Even in vile Ahab there were some good things!

***They know that we be hungry*** This was a very natural conclusion; the Syrians by the closest blockade could not induce them to give up the city, but knowing that they were in a starving condition, they might make use of such a stratagem as that imagined by the king, in order to get possession of the city.

**Verse 13. *And one of his servants answered*** This is a very difficult verse, and the great variety of explanations given of it cast but little light on the subject. I am inclined to believe, with Dr. Kennicott, that there is an interpolation here which puzzles, if not destroys, the sense. "Several instances," says he, "have been given of words improperly repeated by Jewish transcribers, who have been careless enough to make such mistakes, and yet cautious not to alter or erase, for fear of discovery. This verse furnishes another instance in a careless repetition of seven Hebrew words, thus:—

אשר תמי הנשארים אשר נשארו בה הנם ככל ההמו ישראל אשר  
נשארו בה הנם ככל המו ישראל

The exact English of this verse is this: And the servant said, Let them take now five of the remaining horses, which remain in it; behold they are as all the multitude of Israel, which [remain in it; behold they are as all the multitude of Israel which] are consumed; and let us send and see.

“Whoever considers that the second set of these seven words is neither in the Septuagint nor Syriac versions, and that those translators who suppose these words to be genuine alter them to make them look like sense, will probably allow them to have been at first an improper repetition; consequently to be now an interpolation strangely continued in the Hebrew text.” They are wanting in more than forty of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS. In some others they are left without points; in others they have been written in, and afterwards blotted out; and in others four, in others five, of the seven words are omitted. Deuteronomy Rossi concludes thus: *Nec verba haec legunt LXX., Vulg., Syrus simplex, Syrus Heptaplaris Parisiensis, Targum.* They stand on little authority, and the text should be read, omitting the words enclosed by brackets, as above.

***They are consumed*** The words אֲשֶׁר תָּמוּ *asher tamu* should be translated, which are perfect; i.e., fit for service. The rest of the horses were either dead of the famine, killed for the subsistence of the besieged, or so weak as not to be able to perform such a journey.

**Verse 14. *They took two chariot horses*** They had at first intended to send five; probably they found on examination that only two were effective. But if they sent two chariots, each would have two horses, and probably a single horse for crossing the country.

**Verse 15. *All the way was full of garments and vessels*** A manifest proof of the hurry and precipitancy with which they fled.

**Verse 17. *And the people trode upon him*** This officer being appointed by the king to have the command of the gate, the people rushing out to get spoil, and in to carry it to their houses, he was borne down by the multitude and trodden to death. This also was foreseen by the spirit of prophecy. The literal and exact fulfillment of such predictions must have acquired the prophet a great deal of credit in Israel.

DR. Lightfoot remarks that, between the first and last year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, there are very many occurrences mentioned which are not

referred nor fixed to their proper year; and, therefore, they must be calculated in a gross sum, as coming to pass in one of these years. These are the stories contained in chapters 4., 5., 6., and 7., of this book; and in 2 Chronicles 21:6-19. They may be calculated thus: In the first year of Jehoram, Elisha, returning out of Moab into the land of Israel, multiplies the widow's oil; he is lodged in Shunem, and assures his hostess of a child. The seven years' famine was then begun, and he gives the Shunammite warning of its continuance.

The second year she bears her child in the land of the Philistines, 2 Kings 8:2. And Elisha resides among the disciples of the prophets at Gilgal, heals

This year Elisha is at Damascus, Ben-hadad falls sick; Hazael stifles him with a wet cloth, and reigns in his stead. All these things Dr. Lightfoot supposes happened between A.M. 3110 and 3117. — See Lightfoot's Works, vol. i., p. 88. In examining the facts recorded in these books, we shall always find it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to ascertain the exact chronology. The difficulty is increased by a custom common among these annalists, the giving the whole of a story at once, though several incidents took place at the distance of some years from the commencement of the story: as they seem unwilling to have to recur to the same history in the chronological order of its facts.

## CHAPTER 8

*Account of the sojourning of the Shunammite in the land of the Philistines, during the seven years famine, 1, 2. She returns, and solicits the king to let her have back her land; which, with its fruits, he orders to be restored to her, 3-6. Elisha comes to Damascus, and finds Ben-hadad sick; who sends his servant Hazael to the prophet to inquire whether he shall recover, 7-9. Elisha predicts his death, tells Hazael that he shall be king, and shows him the atrocities he will commit, 10-14. Hazael returns, stifles his master with a wet cloth, and reigns in his stead, 15. Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, becomes king over Judah; his bad reign, 16-19. Edom and Libnah revolt, 20-22. Jehoram dies, and his son Ahaziah reigns in his stead, 23, 24. His bad reign, 23-24. He joins with Joram, son of Ahab, against Hazael; Joram is wounded by the Syrians, and goes to Jezreel to be healed, 28, 29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. *Then spake Elisha*** As this is the relation of an event far past, the words should be translated, “But Elisha had spoken unto the woman whose son he had restored unto life; and the woman had arisen, and acted according to the saying of the man of God, and had gone with her family, and had sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.” What is mentioned in these two verses happened several years before the time specified in the third verse. See the observations at the end of the preceding chapter. {2 Kings 7:17}

**Verse 4. *The king talked with Gehazi*** This is supposed to have happened before the cleansing of Naaman, for is it likely that the king would hold conversation with a leprous man; or that, knowing Gehazi had been dismissed with the highest disgrace from the prophet’s service, he could hold any conversation with him concerning his late master, relative to whom he could not expect him to give either a true or impartial account?

Some think that this conversation might have taken place after Gehazi became leprous; the king having an insatiable curiosity to know the private

history of a man who had done such astonishing things: and from whom could he get this information, except from the prophet's own confidential servant? It agrees better with the chronology to consider what is here related as having taken place after the cure of Naaman. As to the circumstance of Gehazi's disease, he might overlook that, and converse with him, keeping at a reasonable distance, as nothing but actual contact could defile.

**Verse 5. *This is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.*** This was a very providential occurrence in behalf of the Shunammite. The relation given by Gehazi was now corroborated by the woman herself; the king was duly affected, and gave immediate orders for the restoration of her land.

**Verse 7. *Elisha came to Damascus*** That he might lead Gehazi to repentance; according to Jarchi and some others.

**Verse 8. *Take a present in thine hand*** But what an immense present was this—forty camels' burden of every good thing of Damascus! The prophet would need to have a very large establishment at Damascus to dispose of so much property.

**Verse 10. *Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die.*** That is, God has not determined thy death, nor will it be a necessary consequence of the disease by which thou art now afflicted; but this wicked man will abuse the power and trust thou hast reposed in him, and take away thy life. Even when God has not designed nor appointed the death of a person, he may nevertheless die, though not without the permission of God. This is a farther proof of the doctrine of contingent events: he might live for all his sickness, but thou wilt put an end to his life.

**Verse 11. *He settled his countenance steadfastly*** Of whom does the author speak? Of Hazael, or of Elisha? Several apply this action to the prophet: he had a murderer before him and he saw the bloody acts he was about to commit, and was greatly distressed; but he endeavored to conceal his feelings: at last his face reddened with anguish, his feelings overcame him, and he burst out and wept.



The Septuagint, as it stands in the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglots, makes the text very plain: *και εστι αζαηλ κατα προσωπον αυτου, και παρεθηκεν ενωπιον αυτου δωρα, εως ησχυνετο· και εκλαυσεν ο ανθρωπος του θεου*, And Hazael stood before his face, and he presented before him gifts till he was ashamed; and the man of God wept.

The Codex Vaticanus, and the Codex Alexandrinus, are nearly as the Hebrew. The Aldine edition agrees in some respects with the Complutensian; but all the versions follow the Hebrew.

**Verse 12. *I know the evil that thou wilt do*** We may see something of the accomplishment of this prediction, 2 Kings 10:32, 33; 13:3, 7.

**Verse 13. *But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great things*** I believe this verse to be wrongly interpreted by the general run of commentators. It is generally understood that Hazael was struck with horror at the prediction; that these cruelties were most alien from his mind; that he then felt distressed and offended at the imputation of such evils to him; and yet, so little did he know his own heart, that when he got power, and had opportunity, he did the whole with a willing heart and a ready hand. On the contrary, I think he was delighted at the prospect; and his question rather implies a doubt whether a person so inconsiderable as he is shall ever have it in his power to do such great, not such evil things; for, in his sight, they had no turpitude. The Hebrew text stands thus: *כִּי יַעֲשֶׂה לָבָב מֵהָעֶבֶד הַזֶּה כִּי מֵהָעֶבֶד הַזֶּה לָבָב* *ki mah abdecha hakkeleb, ki yaaseh haddabar haggadol hazzeh?* “But, what! thy servant, this dog! that he should do this great work!” Or, “Can such a poor, worthless fellow, such a dead dog, [*ο κυων ο τεθνηκως*, Sept.,] perform such mighty actions? thou fillest me with surprise.” And that this is the true sense, his immediate murder of his master on his return fully proves. “Our common version of these words of Hazael,” as Mr. Patten observes, “has stood in the front of many a fine declamation utterly wide of his real sentiment. His exclamation was not the result of horror; his expression has no tincture of it; but of the unexpected glimpse of a crown! The prophet’s answer is plainly calculated to satisfy the astonishment he had excited. A dog bears not, in Scripture, the character of a cruel, but of a despicable animal; nor does he who is shocked with its barbarity call it a GREAT deed.” -David Vindicated.

**Verse 15. A thick cloth** The versions, in general, understand this of a hairy or woollen cloth.

**So that he died** He was smothered, or suffocated.

**Verse 16. In the fifth year of Joram** This verse, as it stands in the present Hebrew text, may be thus read: “And in the fifth year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, [and of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah,] reigned Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.” The three Hebrew words, יהושפט מלך יהודה, and of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, greatly disturb the chronology in this place. It is certain that Jehoshaphat reigned twenty-five years, and that Jehoram his son reigned but eight; 1 Kings 22:42; 2 Kings 8:17; 2 Chronicles 20:31; 21:5. So that he could not have reigned during his father’s life without being king twenty years, and eight years! These words are wanting in three of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS. in the Complutensian and Aldine editions of the Septuagint, in the Peshito Syriac, in the Parisian Heptapler Syriac, the Arabic, and in many copies of the Vulgate, collated by Dr. Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi, both printed and manuscript; to which may be added two MSS. in my own library, one of the fourteenth, the other of the eleventh century, and in what I judge to be the Editio Princeps of the Vulgate. And it is worthy of remark that in this latter work, after the fifteenth verse, ending with Quo mortuo regnavit Azahel pro eo, the following words are in a smaller character, Anno quinto Joram filii Achab regis Israhel, regnavit Joram filius Josaphat rex Juda. Triginta, etc. We have already seen that it is supposed that Jehoshaphat associated his son with him in the kingdom; and that the fifth year in this place only regards Joram king of Israel, and not Jehoshaphat king of Judah. See the notes on 2 Kings 1:17.

**Verse 17. He reigned eight years in Jerusalem.** Beginning with the fifth year of Joram, king of Israel. He reigned three years with Jehoshaphat his father, and five years alone; i.e., from A.M. 3112 to 3119, according to Archbishop Usher.

**Verse 18. The daughter of Ahab was his wife** This was the infamous Athaliah; and through this marriage Jehoshaphat and Ahab were confederates; and this friendship was continued after Ahab’s death.

**Verse 19. *To give him always a light*** To give him a successor in his own family.

**Verse 21. *Joram went over to Zair*** This is the same as Seir, a chief city of Idumea. So Isaiah 21:11: The burden of Dumah (Idumea.) He calleth to me out of Seir.

***Smote the Edomites*** It appears that the Israelites were surrounded by the Idumeans; and that in the night Joram and his men cut their way through them, and so got every man to his tent, for they were not able to make any farther head against these enemies; and therefore it is said, that Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day.

**Verse 23. *Are they not written in the book of the chronicles*** Several remarkable particulars relative to Joram may be found in 2 Chron. 21.

**Verse 26. *Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign*** In 2 Chronicles 22:2, it is said, forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; this is a heavy difficulty, to remove which several expedients have been used. It is most evident that, if we follow the reading in Chronicles, it makes the son two years older than his own father! for his father began to reign when he was thirty-two years old, and reigned eight years, and so died, being forty years old; see 2 Kings 8:17. Dr. Lightfoot says, “The original meaneth thus: Ahaziah was the son of two and forty years; namely, of the house of Omri, of whose seed he was by the mother’s side; and he walked in the ways of that house, and came to ruin at the same time with it. This the text directs us to look after, when it calleth his mother the daughter of Omri, who was indeed the daughter of Ahab. Now, these forty-two years are easily reckoned by any that will count back in the Chronicle to the second of Omri. Such another reckoning there is about Jechoniah, or Jehoiachin, 2 Kings 24:8: Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign. But, 2 Chronicles 36:9, Jehoiachin was the son of the eight years; that is, the beginning of his reign fell in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar, and of Judah’s first captivity.”  
-Works, vol. i., p. 87.

After all, here is a most manifest contradiction, that cannot be removed but by having recourse to violent modes of solution. I am satisfied the reading in 2 Chronicles 22:2, is a mistake; and that we should read there, as here,

twenty-two instead of forty-two years; see the note there. And may we not say with Calmet, Which is most dangerous, to acknowledge that transcribers have made some mistakes in copying the sacred books, or to acknowledge that there are contradictions in them, and then to have recourse to solutions that can yield no satisfaction to any unprejudiced mind? I add, that no mode of solution yet found out has succeeded in removing the difficulty; and of all the MSS. which have been collated, and they amount to several hundred, not one confirms the reading of twenty-two years. And to it all the ancient versions are equally unfriendly.

**Verse 28. *The Syrians wounded Joram*** Ahaziah went with Joram to endeavor to wrest Ramoth-gilead out of the hands of the Syrians, which belonged to Israel and Judah. Ahab had endeavored to do this before, and was slain there; see 1 Kings 22:3, etc., and the notes there.

**Verse 29. *Went back to be healed in Jezreel*** And there he continued till Jehu conspired against and slew him there. And thus the blood of the innocents, which had been shed by Ahab and his wife Jezebel, was visited on them in the total extinction of their family. See the following chapters, where the bloody tale of Jehu's conspiracy is told at large.

I HAVE already had to remark on the chronological difficulties which occur in the historical books; difficulties for which copyists alone are responsible. To remove them by the plan of reconciliation, is in many cases impracticable; to conjectural criticism we must have recourse. And is there a single ancient author of any kind, but particularly those who have written on matters of history and chronology, whose works have been transmitted to us free of similar errors, owing to the negligence of transcribers?

## CHAPTER 9

*Elisha sends one of the disciples of the prophets to Ramoth-gilead, to anoint Jehu king of Israel, 1-3. He acts according to his orders, and informs Jehu that he is to cut off the whole house of Ahab, 4-10. Jehu's captains proclaim him king, 11-14. He goes again Jezreel; where he finds Joram and Ahaziah king of Judah, who had come to visit him; he slays them both: the former is thrown into the portion of Naboth; the latter, having received a mortal wound, gives to Megiddo, and dies there, and is carried to Jerusalem, and buried in the city of David, 15-29. He commands Jezebel to be thrown out of her window; and he treads her under the feet of his horses; and the dogs eat her, according to the word of the Lord, 30-37.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. *One of the children of the prophets*** The Jews say that this was Jonah the prophet, the son of Amittai.

***Gird up thy loins*** What thou hast to do requires the utmost despatch.

**Verse 4. *The young man the prophet*** This should be translated, The servant of the prophet; that is, the servant which Elisha now had in place of Gehazi.

**Verse 6. *King over the people of the Lord*** This pointed out to Jehu that he was to rule that people according to God's law; and consequently, that he was to restore the pure worship of the Most High in Israel.

**Verse 7. *Thou shalt smite the house of Ahab*** For their most cruel murders they have forfeited their own lives, according to that immutable law, "HE that sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed." This and the two following verses contain the commission which Jehu received from the Lord against the bloody house of Ahab.

**Verse 10. *The dogs shall eat Jezebel*** How most minutely was this prophecy fulfilled! See 2 Kings 9:33, etc.

**Verse 11. *Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?*** Was it because he was a holy man of God that he was reputed by a club of irreligious officers to be a madman? In vain do such pretend that they fight for religion, and are the guardians of the public welfare and morals, if they persecute religion and scoff at holy men. But this has been an old custom with all the seed-the sons, of the serpent. As to religious soldiers, they are far to seek, and ill to find, according to the old proverb.

***Ye know the man, and his communication.*** Ye know that he is a madman, and that his message must be a message of folly. Jehu did not appear willing to tell them what had been done, lest it should promote jealousy and envy.

**Verse 12. *They said, It is false*** Or, as the Chaldee has it, Thou liest. Or, perhaps, it might be thus understood, “We know he has said nothing but folly and lies, nevertheless, let us hear what he has said.”

**Verse 13. *Took every man his garment*** This was a ceremony by which they acknowledged him as king; and it was by such a ceremony that the multitudes acknowledged Jesus Christ for the Messiah and King of Israel, a little before his passion: see Matthew 21:7, and the note there. The ceremony was expressive: “As we put our garments under his feet, so we place every thing under his authority, and acknowledge ourselves his servants.”

***On the top of the stairs*** The Chaldee, the rabbins, and several interpreters, understand this of the public sun-dial; which in those ancient times, was formed of steps like stairs, each step serving to indicate, by its shadow, one hour, or such division of time as was commonly used in that country. This dial was, no doubt, in the most public place; and upon the top of it, or on the platform on the top, would be a very proper place to set Jehu, while they blew their trumpets, and proclaimed him king. The Hebrew **מעלות** maaloth is the same word which is used 2 Kings 20:9-11, to signify the dial of Ahaz; and this was probably the very same dial on which that miracle was afterwards wrought: and this dial, **מעלות** maaloth, from **עלה** alah, to go up, ascend, was most evidently made of steps; the shadows projected on which, by a gnomon, at the different elevations of

the sun, would serve to show the popular divisions of time. See the notes on 2 Kings 20:9, etc., and the diagram at the end of that chapter.

**Verse 14. *Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead*** The confederate armies appear to have taken this city; but they were obliged to watch their conquests, as they perceived that Hazael was determined to retake it if possible.

**Verse 16. *Jehu-went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there.*** From the preceding verse we learn, that Joram had been wounded in his attack on Ramoth-gilead, and had gone to Jezreel to be cured; and neither he nor Ahaziah knew any thing of the conspiracy in Ramoth-gilead, because Jehu and his captains took care to prevent any person from leaving the city; so that the two kings at Jezreel knew nothing of what had taken place.

**Verse 17. *A watchman on the tower*** These watchmen, fixed on elevated places and generally within hearing of each other, served as a kind of

religion; and to this Jehu might refer, rather than to the calf-worship, to which himself was most favourably disposed.

**Verse 23. *There is treachery, O Ahaziah.*** This was the first intimation he had of it: he feels for the safety of his friend Ahaziah, and now they fly for their lives.

**Verse 24. *Drew a bow with his full strength*** The marginal reading is correct: He filled his hand with a bow. That is, “He immediately took up his bow, set his arrow, and let fly.” This is the only meaning of the passage.

***Between his arms*** That is, between his shoulders; for he was now turned, and was flying from Jehu.

**Verse 25. *Cast him in the portion of the field*** This was predicted, 1 Kings 21; and what now happened to the son of Ahab is foretold in 1 Kings 21:29 of that chapter.

**Verse 26. *The blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons*** We are not informed in 1 Kings 21 that any of Naboth’s family was slain but himself: but as the object both of Ahab and Jezebel was to have Naboth’s vineyard entirely, and for ever, it is not likely that they would leave any of his posterity, who might at a future time reclaim it as their inheritance. Again, to secure this point, Jezebel had Naboth convicted of treason and atheism; in order that his whole family might be involved in his ruin.

**Verse 27. *Fled by the way of the garden*** The account of the death of Ahaziah, as given in 2 Chronicles 22:8, 9, is very different from that given here: When Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab—he sought Ahaziah; and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu; and when they had slain him, they buried him. “The current of the story at large is this,” says Dr. Lightfoot: “Jehu slayeth Joram in the field of Jezreel, as Ahaziah and Joram were together; Ahaziah, seeing this, flees, and gets into Samaria, and hides himself there. Jehu marcheth to Jezreel, and makes Jezebel dogs’ meat: from thence he sends to Samaria for the heads of Ahab’s children and posterity: which are brought him by night, and showed to the people in the morning. Then he marcheth to Samaria, and by the way slayeth forty-two of Ahab’s kinsmen; and findeth Jehonadab, the father of the Rechabites. Coming into



Samaria, he maketh search for Ahaziah: they find him hid, bring him to Jehu, and he commands to carry him up towards Gur, by Ibleam, and there to slay him. It may be, his father Joram had slain his brethren there, as Ahab had done Naboth, in Jezreel. They do so; smite him there in his chariot; and his charioteer driveth away to Megiddo before he dies. The story in the book of Kings is short: but the book of Chronicles shows the order." Lightfoot's Works, vol. i., p. 88.

**Verse 29. *In the eleventh year of Joram*** The note in our margin contains as good an account of this chronological difficulty as can be reasonably required: Then he began to reign as viceroy to his father in his sickness; 2 Chronicles 21:18, 19. But in Joram's twelfth year he began to reign alone; 2 Kings 8:26.

**Verse 30. *She painted her face, and tired her head*** She endeavored to improve the appearance of her complexion by paint, and the general effect of her countenance by a tiara or turban head-dress. Jonathan, the Chaldee Targumist, so often quoted, translates this עִינָהּ בַצְדִידָא וּכְחַלַּת vechachalath bitsdida eynaha: "She stained her eyes with stibium or antimony." This is a custom in Astatic countries to the present day. From a late traveler in Persia, I borrow the following account:—

"The Persians differ as much from us in their notions of beauty as they do in those of taste. A large soft, and languishing black eye, with them constitutes the perfection of beauty. It is chiefly on this account that the women use the powder of antimony, which, although it adds to the vivacity of the eye, throws a kind of voluptuous languor over it, which makes it appear, (if I may use the expression,) dissolving in bliss. The Persian women have a curious custom of making their eye-brows meet; and if this charm be denied them, they paint the forehead with a kind of preparation made for that purpose." E. S. Waring's Tour to Sheeraz, 4to., 1807, page 62.


This casts light enough on Jezebel's painting, etc., and shows sufficiently with what design she did it, to conquer and disarm Jehu, and induce him to take her for wife, as Jarchi supposes. This staining of the eye with stibium and painting was a universal custom, not only in Asiatic countries, but also in all those that bordered on them, or had connections with them. The Prophet Ezekiel mentions the painting of the eyes, Ezekiel 23:40.

That the Romans painted their eyes we have the most positive evidence. Pliny says, *Tanta est decoris affectatio, ut tinguantur oculi quoque.* Hist. Nat. lib. xi., cap. 37. "Such is their affection of ornament, that they paint their eyes also." That this painting was with stibium or antimony, is plain from these words of St. Cyprian, Deuteronomy Opere et Eleemosynis, *Inunge aculos tuos non stibio diaboli, sed collyrio Christi,* "Anoint your eyes, not with the devil's antimony, but with the eye-salve of Christ." Juvenal is plain on the same subject. Men as well as women in Rome practiced it:—

*Ille supercilium madida fuligine tactum  
Obliqua producit acu pingitque trementes  
Attollens oculos.*

SAT. ii., ver. 93.

*"With sooty moisture one his eye-brows dyes,  
And with a bodkin paints his trembling eyes."*

The manner in which the women in Barbary do it Dr. Russel particularly describes:—"Upon the principle of strengthening the sight, as well as an ornament, it is become a general practice among the women to black the middle of their eye-lids by applying a powder called ismed. Their method of doing it is by a cylindrical piece of silver, steel, or ivory, about two inches long, made very smooth, and about the size of a common probe. This they wet with water, in order that the powder may stick to it, and applying the middle part horizontally to the eye, they shut the eye-lids upon it, and so drawing it through between them, it blacks the inside, leaving a narrow black rim all round the edge. This is sometimes practiced by the men, but is then regarded as foppish." RUSSEL'S Nat. Hist. of Aleppo, page 102. See Parkhurst, sub voc. 

**Verse 31. *Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?*** Jarchi paraphrases this place thus: "If thou hast slain thy master, it is no new thing; for Zimri also slew Elah, the son of Baasha;" which words were rather intended to conciliate than to provoke. But the words are understood by most of the versions thus: Health to Zimri, the slayer of his master!

**Verse 33. *So they threw her down*** What a terrible death! She was already, by the fall, almost dashed to pieces; and the brutal Jehu trampled her already mangled body under his horse's feet!

**Verse 34. *She is a king's daughter.*** Jezebel was certainly a woman of a very high lineage. She was daughter of the king of Tyre; wife of Ahab, king of Israel; mother of Joram, king of Israel; mother-in-law of Joram, king of Judah; and grandmother of Ahaziah, king of Judah.

**Verse 35. *The skull-the feet, and the palms of her hands.*** The dogs did not eat those parts, say Jarchi and Kimchi, because in her festal dances she danced like a dog, on her hands and feet, wantonly moving her head. What other meaning these rabbins had, I do not inquire. She was, no doubt, guilty of the foulest actions, and was almost too bad to be belied.

How literally was the prediction delivered in the preceding book, (1 Kings 21:23, The dogs shall eat Jezebel, by the wall of Jezreel,) fulfilled! And how dearly did she and her husband Ahab pay for the murder of innocent Naboth!

**Verse 37. *And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung*** As it was not buried under the earth, but was eaten by the dogs, this saying was also literally fulfilled.

***They shall not say, This is Jezebel.*** As she could not be buried, she could have no funeral monument. Though so great a woman by her birth, connections, and alliances, she had not the honor of a tomb! There was not even a solitary stone to say, Here lies Jezebel! not even a mound of earth to designate the place of her sepulture! Judgment is God's strange work; but when he contends, how terrible are his judgments! and when he ariseth to execute judgment, who shall stay his hand? How deep are his counsels, and how terrible are his workings!

## CHAPTER 10

*Jehu sends an ironical letter to the elders of Samaria, telling them to choose one of the best of their master's sons, and put him on the throne; to which they return a submissive answer, 1-6. He writes a second letter, and orders them to send him the heads of Ahab's seventy sons; they do so, and they are laid in two heaps at the gate of Jezreel, 7, 8. Jehu shows them to the people, and excuses himself, and states that all is done according to the word of the Lord, 9, 10. He destroys all the kindred of Ahab that remained in Jezreel, 11. He also destroys forty-two men, the brethren of Ahaziah, king of Judah, 12-14. He meets with Jehonadab, and takes him with him in his chariot, 15, 16. He comes to Samaria, and destroys all that were of the kindred of Ahab there, 17. He pretends a great zeal for the worship of Baal, and gathers all his priests together, under the pretense of a grand sacrifice, and slays them all, 18-25. He burns Baal's images, and makes his temple a draught house, 26-28. But he does not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, and does not prosper, 29-31. Hazael vexes Israel, 32, 33. Jehu dies, having reigned over Israel, in Samaria, twenty-eight years, 34-36.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1. Ahab had seventy sons** As he had several wives, he might have many children. The Israelites, from the earliest part of their history, were remarkably fruitful. How amazingly did they multiply in Egypt, even under the hand of the severest oppression! And as to the individuals of whose families we have an account, they are quite remarkable: Rehoboam had thirty-eight sons; Abdon had forty; Tola had thirty; Ahab, seventy; and Gideon, seventy-one.

**Unto the rulers of Jezreel** It certainly should be, unto the rulers of Samaria; for to them and to that city the whole context shows us the letters were sent. See 2 Kings 10:6.

**To them that brought up Ahab's children** It appears that the royal children of Israel and Judah were intrusted to the care of the nobles, and

were brought up by them, (see 2 Kings 10:6;) and to these, therefore, Jehu's letters are directed. It is supposed Isaiah (Isaiah 49:23) alludes to this custom: Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.

**Verse 2. *A fenced city also*** All here seems to refer to Samaria alone; in it were the magazines and implements of war, etc. No reader need be told that these letters were all ironical. It was the same as if he had said, "Ye have no means of defense; Israel is with me: if you yield not up yourselves and the city, I will put you all to the sword."

**Verse 4. *Two kings stood not before him*** That is Joram and Ahaziah.

**Verse 5. *He that was over the house, etc.*** Thus all the constituted authorities agreed to submit.

***Will do all that thou shalt bid us*** They made no conditions, and stood pledged to commit the horrid murders which this most execrable man afterwards commanded.

**Verse 6. *Come to me to Jezreel*** Therefore the letters were not written to Jezreel, but from Jezreel to Samaria.

**Verse 7. *Put their heads in baskets*** What cold-blooded wretches were the whole of these people!

**Verse 8. *Lay ye them in two heaps*** It appears that the heads of these princes had arrived at Jezreel in the night time: Jehu ordered them to be left at the gate of the city, a place of public resort, that all the people might see them, and be struck with terror, and conclude that all resistance to such authority and power would be vain.

**Verse 9. *Ye be righteous*** Another irony, intended partly to excuse himself, and to involve them in the odium of this massacre, and at the same time to justify the conduct of both, by showing that all was done according to the commandment of the Lord.

**Verse 11. *Jehu slew all*** So it appears that the great men who had so obsequiously taken off the heads of Ahab's seventy sons, fell also a sacrifice to the ambition of this incomparably bad man.

**Verse 12. *The shearing house*** Probably the place where the shepherds met for the annual sheep shearing.

**Verse 13. *The brethren of Ahaziah*** The relatives of his family; for it does not appear that he had any brethren, properly so called: but we know that the term brethren among the Jews signified the relatives of the same family, and especially brothers' and sisters' children: and that these were such, see 2 Chronicles 22:8.

***We go down to salute, etc.*** So promptly had Jehu executed all his measures, that even the nearest relatives of the murdered kings had not heard of their death, and consequently had no time to escape. They were all taken as in a net.

**Verse 14. *The pit of the shearing house*** Probably the place where they washed the sheep previously to shearing, or the fleeces after they were shorn off.

**Verse 15. *Jehonadab the son of Rechab*** For particulars concerning this man, his ancestry, and posterity, see the notes on Jer. 35.

***Is thine heart right*** With me, in the prosecution of a reform in Israel; as my heart is with thy heart in the true religion of Jehovah, and the destruction of Baal?

***It is.*** I wish a reform in the religion of the country; I am his friend who shall endeavor to promote it.

***Give me thine hand.*** This has been generally considered as exacting a promise from Jehonadab; but does it mean any more than his taking him by the hand, to help him to step into his chariot, in which Jehu was then sitting? Jehonadab was doubtless a very honorable man in Israel; and by carrying him about with him in his chariot, Jehu endeavored to acquire the public esteem. "Jehu must be acting right, for Jehonadab is with him, and approves his conduct."

**Verse 16. *Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.*** O thou ostentatious and murderous hypocrite! Thou have zeal for Jehovah and his pure religion! Witness thy calves at Dan and Bethel, and the general profligacy of thy conduct. He who can call another to witness his zeal for

religion, or his works of charity, has as much of both as serves his own turn.

**Verse 18. *Ahab served Baal a little*** Jehu had determined to have no worship in Israel but that of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel; therefore he purposes to destroy all the worshippers of Baal: and that he may do it without suspicion, he proclaims a great sacrifice; and that he may do it the more easily, he gathers them all together into one place.

**Verse 19. *Whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live.*** Because, as he will thereby show himself without zeal for the service of his God, he will justly forfeit his life. All this was done in the very spirit of deceit.

**Verse 22. *He said unto him that was over the vestry*** The word vestry comes from vestiarius, and that from vestes, garments, from vestio, I clothe; and signifies properly the place where the sacerdotal robes and pontifical ornaments are kept. The priests of Baal had their robes as well as the priests of the Lord; but the garments were such that one could be easily distinguished from the other.

**Verse 23. *None of the servants of the Lord*** Though he was not attached to that service, yet he would tolerate it; and as he was led to suppose that he was fulfilling the will of Jehovah in what he was doing, he would of course treat his worship and worshippers with the more respect.

He might have ordered the search to be made on pretense of expelling any of those whom they would consider the profane, especially as this was “a solemn assembly for Baal,” as was the custom with the heathen when any extraordinary exhibition of or for their god was expected; thus Callimachus, (Hymn to Apollo,) after imagining the temple and its suburbs to be shaken by the approach of Apollo, cries out, *εκας, εκας, οστις, αλιτρος*. To prevent any suspicion of his real design, such might have been Jehu’s plea, else alarm must have been excited, and perhaps some would have escaped.

**Verse 25. *As soon as he had made an end of offering*** Had Jehu been a man of any conscientious principle in religion, he would have finished the tragedy before he offered the burnt-offering; but to a man of no religion, the worship of Jehovah and of Baal are alike. If he prefers either, it is merely as a statesman, for political purposes.

**To the guard and to the captains** לרצים ולשלשים leratsim

uleshalashim; to the couriers or runners, and the shalashim, the men of the third rank, those officers who were next to the nobles, the king and these being only their superiors. The runners were probably a sort of light infantry.

**The city of the house of Baal.** Does not this mean a sort of holy of holies, where the most sacred images of Baal were kept? A place separated from the temple of Baal, as the holy of holies in the temple of Jehovah was separated from what was called the holy place.

**Verse 27. Made it a draught house** A place for human excrement; so all the versions understand it. Nothing could be more degrading than this; he made it a public necessary.

**Verse 30. Thy children of the fourth generation** These four descendants of Jehu were Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam the second, and Zechariah; see 2 Kings 14 and 15. This was all the compensation Jehu had in either world, as a recompense of his zeal for the Lord.

**Verse 31. Jehu took no heed** He never made it his study; indeed, he never intended to walk in this way; it neither suited his disposition nor his politics.

**Verse 32. The Lord began to cut Israel short** The marginal reading is best: The Lord cut off the ends; and this he did by permitting Hazael to seize on the coasts, to conquer and occupy the frontier towns. This was the commencement of those miserable ravages which Elisha predicted; see 2 Kings 8:12. And we find from the next verse that he seized on all the land of Gilead, and that of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; in a word, whatever Israel possessed on the east side of Jordan.

**Verse 34. Are they not written in the book of the chronicles** We have no chronicles in which there is any thing farther spoken of this bad man. His reign was long, twenty-eight years; and yet we know nothing of it but the commencement.

FOR barbarity and hypocrisy Jehu has few parallels; and the cowardliness and baseness of the nobles of Samaria have seldom been equalled. Ahab's bloody house must be cut off; but did God ever design that it should be



done by these means? The men were, no doubt, profligate and wicked, and God permitted their iniquity to manifest itself in this way; and thus the purpose of God, that Ahab's house should no more reign, was completely accomplished: see 1 Kings 21:19, 21, 29. And by this conduct Jehu is said to have executed what was right in God's eyes, 2 Kings 10:30. The cutting off of Ahab's family was decreed by the Divine justice; the means by which it was done, or at least the manner of doing, were not entirely of his appointing: yet the commission given him by the young prophet, 2 Kings 9:7, was very extensive. Yet still many things seem to be attributed to God, as the agent, which he does not execute, but only permits to be done.

## CHAPTER 11

*Athaliah destroys all that remain of the seed royal of Judah, 1. Jehosheba hides Joash the son of Ahaziah, and he remains hidden in the house of the Lord six years; and Athaliah reigns over the land, 2, 3. Jehoiada, the high priest, calls the nobles privately together into the temple, shows them the king's son, takes an oath of them, arms them, places guards around the temple, and around the young king's person; they anoint and proclaim him, 4-12. Athaliah is alarmed, comes into the temple, is seized, carried forth, and slain, 13-16. Jehoiada causes the people to enter into a covenant with the Lord; they destroy Baal's house, priest, and images, 17, 18. Joash is brought to the king's house, reigns, and all the land rejoices, 19-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. Athaliah** This woman was the daughter of Ahab, and grand-daughter of Omri, and wife of Joram king of Judah, and mother of Ahaziah.

***Destroyed all the seed royal.*** All that she could lay her hands on whom Jehu had left; in order that she might get undisturbed possession of the kingdom.

How dreadful is the lust of reigning! it destroys all the charities of life; and turns fathers, mothers, brothers, and children, into the most ferocious savages! Who, that has it in his power, makes any conscience

*“To swim to sovereign rule through seas of blood?”*

In what a dreadful state is that land that is exposed to political revolutions, and where the succession to the throne is not most positively settled by the clearest and most decisive law! Reader, beware of revolutions; there have been some useful ones, but they are in general the heaviest curse of God.

**Verse 2. *Daughter of-Joram, sister of Ahaziah*** It is not likely that Jehosheba was the daughter of Athaliah; she was sister, we find, to Ahaziah the son of Athaliah, but probably by a different mother. The mother of Jehoash was Zibiah of Beer-sheba; see 2 Kings 12:1.

**Verse 3. *He was-hid in the house of the Lord*** This might be readily done, because none had access to the temple but the priests; and the high priest himself was the chief manager of this business.

**Verse 4. *And the seventh year Jehoiada sent*** He had certainly sounded them all, and brought them into the interests of the young king, before this time; the plot having been laid, and now ripe for execution, he brings the chief officers of the army and those of the body guard into the temple, and there binds them by an oath of secrecy, and shows them the king's son, in whose behalf they are to rise.

**Verse 5. *That enter in on the Sabbath*** It appears that Jehoiada chose the Sabbath day to proclaim the young king, because as that was a day of public concourse, the gathering together of the people who were in this secret would not be noticed; and it is likely that they all came unarmed, and were supplied by Jehoiada with the spears and shields which David had laid up in the temple, 2 Kings 11:10.

The priests and Levites were divided into twenty-four classes by David, and each served a week by turns in the temple, and it was on the Sabbath that they began the weekly service, all this favored Jehoiada's design.

**Verse 10. *King David's spears and shields*** Josephus expressly says that David had provided an arsenal for the temple, out of which Jehoiada took those arms. His words are; *ανοιξας δε ιωαδος την εν τω ιερω οπλοθηκην, ην δαβιδης κατεσκευασε, διεμερισε τοις εκατονταρχαις αμα και ιεροισι και λευιταις απανθ' οσα ευρεν εν αυτη δορατα τε και φαρετρας, και ει τι ετερον ειδος οπλου κατελαβε.* "And Jehoiada having opened the arsenal in the temple, which David had prepared, he divided among the centurions, priests, and Levites, the spears, (arrows,) and quivers, and all other kinds of weapons which he found there." -Ant. lib. ix., c. 7, s. 8.

**Verse 12. *Put the crown upon him*** This was a diadem or golden band that went round the head.

**And-the testimony** Probably the book of the law, written on a roll of vellum. This was his scepter. Some think that it was placed upon his head, as well as the diadem. The diadem, the testimony, and the anointing oil, were essential to his consecration.

**They clapped their hands** This I believe is the first instance on record of clapping the hands as a testimony of joy.

**God save the king** יהי המלך yechi hannmelech; May the king live! So the words should be translated wherever they occur.

**Verse 14. The king stood by a pillar** Stood ON a pillar or tribunal; the place or throne on which they were accustomed to put the kings when they proclaimed them.

**Treason, Treason.** קשר קשר keshher, kasher; A conspiracy, A conspiracy! from kashar, to bind, unite together.

**Verse 15. Have her forth** She had pressed in among the guards into the temple.

**And him that followeth** The person who takes her part, let him instantly be slain.

**Verse 16. By the way-which the horses came** They probably brought her out near the king's stables. It has been supposed, from Ezekiel 46:1, 2, that the east gate of the inner court was that by which the king entered on the Sabbath day, whereas on all other days he entered by the south gate. And there was another gate, called the horse gate, in the wall of the city, (Jeremiah 31:40,) for the king's horses to go out at from the stables at Millo, which is therefore called, 2 Chronicles 23:15, the horse gate toward the king's house.

**Verse 17. Jehoiada made a covenant** A general covenant was first made between the Lord, the Supreme King, the king his viceroy, and the people, that they should all be the Lord's people; each being equally bound to live according to the Divine law.

Then, secondly, a particular covenant was made between the king and the people, by which the king was bound to rule according to the laws and constitution of the kingdom, and to watch and live for the safety of the

public. And the people were bound on their part, to love, honor, succor, and obey the king. Where these mutual and just agreements are made and maintained, there can be nothing else than prosperity in the Church and the state.

**Verse 18. *His altars and images brake they in pieces*** It is probable that Athaliah had set up the worship of Baal in Judah, as Jezebel had done in Israel; or probably it had never been removed since the days of Solomon. It was no wonder that Jehoiada began his reform with this act, when we learn from 2 Chronicles 24:7, that the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim.

**Verse 20. *The people-rejoiced*** They were glad to get rid of the tyranny of Athaliah.

***And the city was in quiet*** She had no partisans to rise up and disturb the king's reign.

**Verse 21. *Seven years old was Jehoash*** The first instance on record of making a child seven years old the king of any nation, and especially of such a nation as the Jews, who were at all times very difficult to be governed.

## CHAPTER 12

*Jehoash reigns well under the instructions of Jehoiada the priest, 1-3. He directs the repairing of the temple; the account of what was done, 4-16. Hazael takes Gath; and, proceeding to besiege Jerusalem, is prevented by Jehoash, who gives him all the treasures and hallowed things of the house of the Lord, 17, 18. The servants of Jehoash conspire against and slay him, 19-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 2. *Jehoash did-right in the sight of the Lord*** While Jehoiada the priest, who was a pious, holy man, lived, Jehoash walked uprightly; but it appears from 2 Chronicles 24:17, 18, that he departed from the worship of the true God after the death of this eminent high priest, lapsed into idolatry, and seems to have had a share in the murder of Zechariah, who testified against his transgressions, and those of the princes of Judah. See above, 2 Kings 12:20-22.

O how few of the few who begin to live to God continue unto the end!

**Verse 3. *The high places were not taken away*** Without the total destruction of these there could be no radical reform. The toleration of any species of idolatry in the land, whatever else was done in behalf of true religion, left, and in effect fostered, a seed which springing up, regenerated in time the whole infernal system. Jehoiada did not use his influence as he might have done; for as he had the king's heart and hand with him, he might have done what he pleased.

**Verse 4. *All the money of the dedicated things*** From all this account we find that the temple was in a very ruinous state; the walls were falling down, some had perhaps actually fallen, and there was no person so zealous for the pure worship of God, as to exert himself to shore up the falling temple!

The king himself seems to have been the first who noticed these dilapidations, and took measures for the necessary repairs. The repairs were made from the following sources: 1. The things which pious persons had dedicated to the service of God. 2. The free-will offerings of strangers who had visited Jerusalem: the money of every one that passeth. 3. The half-shekel which the males were obliged to pay from the age of twenty years (Exodus 30:12) for the redemption of their souls, that is their lives, which is here called the money that every man is set at. All these sources had ever been in some measure open, but instead of repairing the dilapidations in the Lord's house, the priests and Levites had converted the income to their own use.

**Verse 6. *In the three and twentieth year*** In what year Jehoash gave the orders for these repairs, we cannot tell; but the account here plainly intimates that they had been long given, and that nothing was done, merely through the inactivity and negligence of the priests; see 2 Chronicles 24:6.

It seems that the people had brought money in abundance, and the pious Jehoiada was over the priests, and yet nothing was done! Though Jehoiada was a good man, he does not appear to have had much of the spirit of an active zeal; and simple piety, without zeal and activity, is of little use when a reformation in religion and manners is necessary to be brought about. Philip Melancthon was orthodox, pious, and learned, but he was a man of comparative inactivity. In many respects Martin Luther was by far his inferior, but in zeal and activity he was a flaming and consuming fire; and by him, under God, was the mighty Reformation, from the corruptions of popery, effected. Ten thousand Jehoiadas and Melancthons might have wished it in vain; Luther worked, and God worked by him, in him, and for him.

**Verse 9. *Jehoiada-took a chest*** This chest was at first set beside the altar, as is here mentioned; but afterwards, for the convenience of the people, it was set without the gate; see 2 Chronicles 24:8.

**Verse 10. *The king's scribe and the high priest*** It was necessary to associate with the high priest some civil authority and activity, in order to get the neglected work performed.

**Verse 13. *Howbeit there were not made-bowls, etc.*** That is, there were no vessels made for the service of the temple till all the outward repairs were completed; but after this was done, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels of gold and silver; 2 Chronicles 24:14.

**Verse 15. *They reckoned not with the men*** They placed great confidence in them, and were not disappointed, for they dealt faithfully.

**Verse 17. *Hazael-fought against Gath, and took it*** This city, with its satrapy or lordship, had been taken from the Philistines by David, (see 2 Samuel 8:1, and 1 Chronicles 18:1;) and it had continued in the possession of the kings of Judah till this time. On what pretense Hazael seized it, we cannot tell; he had the *ultima ratio regum*, power to do it, and he wanted more territory.

**Verse 18. *Took all the hallowed things*** He dearly bought a peace which was of short duration, for the next year Hazael returned, and Jehoash, having no more treasures, was obliged to hazard a battle, which he lost, with the principal part of his nobility, so that Judah was totally ruined, and Jehoash shortly after slain in his bed by his own servants; 2 Chronicles 24:23.

**Verse 19. *The rest of the acts of Joash*** We have already seen that this man, so promising in the beginning of his reign, apostatized, became an idolater, encouraged idolatry among his subjects, and put the high priest Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada his benefactor, to death; and now God visited that blood upon him by the hands of the tyrannous king of Syria, and by his own servants.

**Verse 20. *The house of Millo*** Was a royal palace, built by David; (see 2 Samuel 5:9;) and Silla is supposed to be the name of the road or causeway that led to it. Millo was situated between the old city of Jerusalem, and the city of David.

**Verse 21. *For Jozachar*** This person is called Zabad in 2 Chronicles 24:26; and Shimeath his mother is said to be an Ammonitess, as Jehozabad is said to be the son, not of Shomer, but of Shimrith, a Moabitess.



*They buried him with his fathers in the city of David* But they did not bury him in the sepulchres of the kings; this is supposed to express the popular disapprobation of his conduct. Thus ended a reign full of promise and hope in the beginning, but profligate, cruel, and ruinous in the end. Never was the hand of God's justice more signally stretched out against an apostate king and faithless people, than at this time. Now Hazael had a plenary commission; the king, the nobles, and the people, were food for his sword, and by a handful of Syrians the mighty armies of Israel were overthrown: For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the Lord God, 2 Chronicles 24:24. Thus, as righteousness exalteth a nation, so sin is the disgrace and confusion of any people. Sin destroys both counsel and strength; and the wicked flee when none pursue.

## CHAPTER 13

*Jehoahaz reigns in Israel seventeen years; his various acts, and wars with the Syrians, 1-8. He dies, and Joash reigns in his stead, and does evil in the sight of the Lord, 9-13. Elisha's last sickness; he foretells a three-fold defeat of the Syrians, and dies, 14-20. A dead man raised to life by touching the bones of Elisha, 21. Hazael dies, having long oppressed Israel; but Jehoash recovers many cities out of the hands of Ben-hadad, his successor, and defeats him three times, 22-25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. *In the three and twentieth year of Joash*** The chronology here is thus accounted for; Jehoahaz began his reign at the commencement of the twenty-third year of Joash, and reigned seventeen years, fourteen alone, and three years with his son Joash; the fourteenth year was but just begun.

**Verse 5. *And the Lord gave Israel a savior*** This was undoubtedly Joash, whose successful wars against the Syrians are mentioned at the conclusion of the chapter. Houbigant recommends to read the seventh verse after the fourth, then the fifth and sixth, and next the eighth, etc.

**Verse 6. *The grove also in Samaria*** Asherah, or Astarte, remained in Samaria, and there was she worshipped, with all her abominable rites.

**Verse 10. *In the thirty and seventh year*** Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, was associated with his father in the government two years before his death. It is this association that is spoken of here. He succeeded him two years after, a little before the death of Elisha. Joash reigned sixteen years, which include the years he governed conjointly with his father. — Calmet.

**Verse 12. *Wherewith he fought against Amaziah*** This war with Amaziah may be seen in ample detail 2 Chron. 25; it ended in the total defeat of Amaziah, who was taken prisoner by Joash, and afterwards slain in a conspiracy at Lachish. Joash took Jerusalem, broke down four

hundred cubits of the wall, and took all the royal treasures, and the treasures of the house of God. See 2 Chronicles 25:20-27.

**Verse 14. *Now Elisha was fallen sick*** This is supposed to have taken place in the tenth year of Joash; and if so, Elisha must have prophesied about sixty-five years.

***O my father, my father*** “What shall I do now thou art dying? thou art the only defense of Israel.” He accosts him with the same words which himself spoke to Elijah when he was translated; see 2 Kings 2:12, and the note there.

**Verse 15. *Take bow and arrows.*** The bow, the arrows, and the smiting on the ground, were all emblematical things, indicative of the deliverance of Israel from Syria.

**Verse 17. *Open the window eastward*** This was towards the country beyond Jordan, which Hazael had taken from the Israelites.

***The arrow of-deliverance from Syria*** That is, As surely as that arrow is shot towards the lands conquered from Israel by the Syrians, so surely shall those lands be reconquered and restored to Israel.

It was an ancient custom to shoot an arrow or cast a spear into the country which an army intended to invade. Justin says that, as soon as Alexander the Great had arrived on the coasts of Iona, he threw a dart into the country of the Persians. “Cum delati in continentem essent, primus Alexander jaculum velut in hostilem terram jacit.” -Just. lib. ii.

The dart, spear, or arrow thrown, was an emblem of the commencement of hostilities. Virgil (AEn. lib. ix., ver. 51) represents Turnus as giving the signal of attack by throwing a spear:—

*Ecquis erit mecum, O Juvenes, qui primus in hostem?  
En, ait: et jaculum intorquens emittit in auras,  
Principium pugnae; et campo sese arduus infert.*

*“Who, first,” he cried, “with me the foe will dare?”  
Then hurled a dart, the signal of the war.*

PITT.

Servius, in his note upon this place, shows that it was a custom to proclaim war in this stay: the pater patratus, or chief of the Feciales, a sort of heralds, went to the confines of the enemy's country, and, after some solemnities, said with a loud voice, I wage war with you, for such and such reasons; and then threw in a spear. It was then the business of the parties thus defied or warned to take the subject into consideration; and if they did not, within thirty days, come to some accommodation, the war was begun.

***Thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek*** This was a city of Syria, and probably the place of the first battle; and there, it appears, they had a total overthrow. They were, in the language of the text, consumed or exterminated.

**Verse 18. *Smite upon the ground*** As he was ordered to take his arrows, the smiting on the ground must mean shooting arrows into it.

***He smote thrice, and stayed.*** The prophet knew that this shooting was emblematical: probably the king was not aware of what depended on the frequency of the action; and perhaps it was of the Lord that he smote only thrice, as he had determined to give Israel those three victories only over the Syrians. Elisha's being wroth because there were only three instead of five or six shots does not prove that God was wroth, or that he had intended to give the Syrians five or six overthrows.

**Verse 20. *And Elisha died*** The two prophets, Elijah and Elisha, were both most extraordinary men. Of the former, it is difficult to say whether he was a man, or an angel in a human body. The arguments for this latter opinion are strong, the objections against it very feeble. His being fed by an angel is no proof that he was not an angel incarnate, for God manifest in the flesh was fed by the same ministry. Of him the following from Ecclesiasticus (chap. 48:1-11) is a nervous character:—

1. Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp.
2. He brought a sore famine upon them, and by his zeal he diminished their number.
3. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heaven, and also three times brought down fire.

4. O Elias, how wast thou honored in thy wondrous deeds! and who may glory like unto thee!
5. Who didst raise up a dead man from death, and his soul from the place of the dead, by the word of the Most High:
6. Who broughtest kings to destruction, and honorable men from their bed:
7. Who heardest the rebuke of the Lord in Sinai, and in Horeb the judgment of vengeance:
8. Who anointedst kings to take revenge, and prophets to succeed after him:
9. Who wast taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and in a chariot of fiery horses:
10. Who wast ordained for reproofs in their times to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgment, before it brake forth into fury; and to turn the heart of the father unto the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.
11. Blessed are they that saw thee, and slept in love; for we shall surely live.

Elisha was not less eminent than Elijah; the history of his ministry is more detailed than that of his master, and his miracles are various and stupendous. In many things there is a striking likeness between him and our blessed Lord, and especially in the very beneficent miracles which he wrought. Of him the same author gives this character, *ib. ver. 12-14*: Elisha was filled with his spirit: whilst he lived he was not moved with the presence of any prince; neither could any bring him into subjection. Nothing could overcome him; and after his death his body prophesied, *i.e.*, raised a dead man to life, as we learn from the following verse. He did wonders in his life, and at his death there his works marvellous; perhaps referring to his last acts with Joash.

***The bands of the Moabites*** Marauding parties; such as those mentioned 2 Kings 5:2.

**Verse 21. *They spied a band*** They saw one of these marauding parties; and through fear could not wait to bury their dead, but threw the body into the grave of Elisha, which chanced then to be open; and as soon as it

touched the bones of the prophet, the man was restored to life. This shows that the prophet did not perform his miracles by any powers of his own, but by the power of God; and he chose to honor his servant, by making even his bones the instrument of another miracle after his death. This is the first, and I believe the last, account of a true miracle performed by the bones of a dead man; and yet on it and such like the whole system of miraculous working relics has been founded by the popish Church.

**Verse 23. *And the Lord was gracious unto them*** וַיַּיָּאֲחֹן vaiyachon, he had tender affection for them, as a husband has for his wife, or a father for his own children.

***And had compassion on them*** וַיִּרְחַמֵּם vairachamem, his bowels yearned over them; he felt for them, he sympathized with them in all their distress: Therefore are my bowels troubled; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord, Jeremiah 31:20.

***And had respect unto them*** וַיִּפֶּן vaiyiphen, he turned face towards them, he received them again into favor; and this because of his covenant with their fathers: they must not be totally destroyed; the Messiah must come from them, and through them must come that light which is to enlighten the Gentiles, and therefore he would not make an entire end of them.

***Neither cast he them from his presence as yet.*** But now they are cast out from his presence; they have sinned against the only remedy for their souls. They sit in darkness and the shadow of death; the veil is upon their face; but if they yet turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

**Verse 25. *Three times did Joash beat him*** The particulars of these battles we have not; but these three victories were according to the prediction of Elisha, 2 Kings 13:19. That these victories were very decisive we learn from their fruits, for Joash took from the Syrians the cities which Hazael had taken from Israel: viz., Gilead, the possessions of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and the country of Bashan; see 2 Kings 10:33.

Thus God accomplished his word of judgment, and his word of mercy. The Syrians found themselves to be but men, and the Israelites found they could do nothing without God. In the dispensations of his justice and mercy, God has ever in view, not only the comfort, support, and salvation

of his followers, but also the conviction and salvation of his enemies; and by his judgments many of these have been awakened out of their sleep, turned to God, learned righteousness, and finally become as eminent for their obedience, as they were before for their rebellion.

## CHAPTER 14

*Amaziah begins to reign well; his victory over the Edomites, 1-7. He challenges Jehoash, king of Israel, 8. Jehoash's parable of the thistle and the cedar, 9, 10. The two armies meet at Beth-shemesh; and the men of Judah are defeated, 11, 12. Jehoash takes Jerusalem, breaks down four hundred cubits of the wall; takes the treasures of the king's house, and of the temple; and takes hostages, and returns to Samaria, 13, 14. The death and burial of both these kings, 15-20. Azariah, the son of Amaziah, made king; he builds Elath, 21, 22. Jeroboam the second is made king over Israel: his wicked reign and death, 23-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 1. *In the second year of Joash*** This second year should be understood as referring to the time when his father Jehoahaz associated him with himself in the kingdom: for he reigned two years with his father; so this second year of Joash is the first of his absolute and independent government. — See Calmet.

**Verse 5. *As soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand*** No doubt those wicked men, Jozachar and Jehozabad, who murdered his father, had considerable power and influence; and therefore he found it dangerous to bring them to justice, till he was assured of the loyalty of his other officers: when this was clear, he called them to account, and put them to death.

**Verse 6. *But the children of the murderers he slew not*** Here he showed his conscientious regard for the law of Moses; for God had positively said, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin, Deuteronomy 24:16.

**Verse 7. *He slew of Edom to the valley of salt*** This war is more circumstantially related in 2 Chronicles 25:5, etc. The Idumeans had arisen in the reign of Joram king of Judah, and shaken off the yoke of the house



of David. Amaziah determined to reduce them to obedience; he therefore levied an army of three hundred thousand men in his own kingdom, and hired a hundred thousand Israelites, at the price of one hundred talents. When he was about to depart at the head of this numerous army, a prophet came to him and ordered him to dismiss the Israelitish army, for God was not with them: and on the king of Judah expressing regret for the loss of his hundred talents, he was answered, that the Lord could give him much more than that. He obeyed, sent back the Israelites, and at the head of his own men attacked the Edomites in the valley of salt, slew ten thousand on the spot, and took ten thousand prisoners, all of whom he precipitated from the rock, or Selah, which was afterwards called Joktheel, a place or city supposed to be the same with Petra, which gave name to Arabia Petraea, where there must have been a great precipice, from which the place took its name of Selah or Petra.

**Verse 8. *Come, let us look one another in the face.*** This was a real declaration of war; and the ground of it is most evident from this circumstance: that the one hundred thousand men of Israel that had been dismissed, though they had the stipulated money, taking the advantage of Amaziah's absence, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria to Beth-horon, and smote three thousand men, and took much spoil, 2 Chronicles 25:10-13. Amaziah no doubt remonstrated with Jehoash, but to no purpose; and therefore he declared war against him.

**Verse 9. *Jehoash-sent to Amaziah-saying*** The meaning of this parable is plain. The thistle that was in Lebanon-Amaziah, king of Judah, sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon-Jehoash, king of Israel, saying, Give thy daughter-a part of thy kingdom, to my son to wife-to be united to, and possessed by the kings of Judah. And there passed by a wild beast-Jehoash and his enraged army, and trode down the thistle-utterly discomfited Amaziah and his troops, pillaged the temple, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem: see 2 Kings 14:12-14. Probably Amaziah had required certain cities of Israel to be given up to Judah; if so, this accounts for that part of the parable, Give thy daughter to my son to wife.

**Verse 10. *Glory of this, and tarry at home*** There is a vast deal of insolent dignity in this remonstrance of Jehoash: but it has nothing conciliatory; no proposal of making amends for the injury his army had done to the

unoffending inhabitants of Judah. The ravages committed by the army of Jehoash were totally unprovoked, and they were base and cowardly; they fell upon women, old men, and children, and butchered them in cold blood, for all the effective men were gone off with their king against the Edomites. The quarrel of Amaziah was certainly just, yet he was put to the rout; he did meddle to his hurt; he fell, and Judah fell with him, as Jehoash had said: but why was this? Why it came of God; for he had brought the gods of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burnt incense to them; therefore God delivered them into the hands of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom, 2 Chronicles 25:14, 20. This was the reason why the Israelites triumphed.

**Verse 13. Took Amaziah king of Judah** It is plain that Amaziah afterwards had his liberty; but how or on what terms he got it, is not known. See on the following verse.

**Verse 14. And he took-hostages** **התערבות** hattaaruboth, pledges; from **ערב** arab, to pledge, give security, etc., for the performance of some promise. See the meaning of this word interpreted in the note on Genesis 38:17. It is likely that Amaziah gave some of the nobles or some of his own family as hostages, that he might regain his liberty; and they were to get their liberty when he had fulfilled his engagements; but of what kind these were we cannot tell, nor, indeed, how he got his liberty.

**Verse 15. How he fought with Amaziah** The only fighting between them was the battle already mentioned; and this is minutely related in 2 Chronicles 25:21-24.

**Verse 19. They made a conspiracy against him** His defeat by Jehoash, and the consequent pillaging of the temple, and emptying the royal exchequer, and the dismantling of Jerusalem, had made him exceedingly unpopular; so that probably the whole of the last fifteen years of his life were a series of troubles and distresses.

**Verse 21. Took Azariah** He is also called Uzziah, 2 Chronicles 26:1. The former signifies, The help of the Lord; the latter, The strength of the Lord.

**Verse 22. He built Elath** This city belonged to the Edomites; and was situated on the eastern branch of the Red Sea, thence called the Elanitic

Gulf. It had probably suffered much in the late war; and was now rebuilt by Uzziah, and brought entirely under the dominion of Judah.

**Verse 25. *He restored the coast of Israel*** From the description that is here given, it appears that Jeroboam reconquered all the territory that had been taken from the kings of Israel; so that Jeroboam the second left the kingdom as ample as it was when the ten tribes separated under Jeroboam the first.

**Verse 26. *The Lord saw the affliction of Israel*** It appears that about this time Israel had been greatly reduced; and great calamities had fallen upon all indiscriminately; even the diseased and captives in the dungeon had the hand of God heavy upon them, and there was no helper; and then God sent Jonah to encourage them, and to assure them of better days. He was the first of the prophets, after Samuel, whose writings are preserved; yet the prophecy delivered on this occasion is not extant; for what is now in the prophecies of Jonah, relates wholly to Nineveh.

**Verse 28. *How he warred, and-recovered Damascus*** We learn from 1 Chronicles 18:3-11, that David had conquered all Syria, and put garrisons in Damascus and other places, and laid all the Syrians under tribute; but this yoke they had not only shaken off, but they had conquered a considerable portion of the Israelitish territory, and added it to Syria. These latter Jeroboam now recovered; and thus the places which anciently belonged to Judah by David's conquests, and were repossessed by Syria, he now conquered, and added to Israel.

**Verse 29. *Jeroboam slept with his fathers*** He died a natural death; and was regularly succeeded by his son Zachariah, who, reigning badly, was, after six months, slain by Shallum, who succeeded him, and reigned but one month, being slain by Menahem, who succeeded him, and reigned ten years over Israel. Amos the prophet lived in the reign of Jeroboam; and was accused by Amaziah, one of the idolatrous priests of Beth-el, of having predicted the death of Jeroboam by the sword, but this was a slander: what he did predict, and which came afterwards to pass, may be seen Amos 7:10-17. The interregnum referred to in the margin cannot be accounted for in a satisfactory manner.

## CHAPTER 15

*Azariah begins to reign over Judah, and acts well, but does not remove the high places, 1-4. He becomes leprous, and dies, after having reigned fifty-two years; and Jotham, his son, reigns in his stead, 5-7. Zachariah reigns over Israel, and acts wickedly; and Shallum conspires against him and slays him, after he had reigned six months, 8-12. Shallum reigns one month, and is slain by Menahem, 13-15. Menahem's wicked and oppressive reign; he subsidizes the king of Assyria, and dies, after having reigned ten years, 16-22. Pekahiah, his son, reigns in his stead; does wickedly; Pekah, one of his captains, conspires against and kills him, after he had reigned two years, 23-26. Pekah reigns in his stead, and acts wickedly, 27-28. Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, carries into captivity the inhabitants of many cities, 29. Hoshea conspires against and slays Pekah, after he had reigned twenty years; and reigns in his stead, 30, 31. Jotham beans to reign over Judah; he reigns well; dies after a reign of sixteen years, and is succeeded by his son Ahaz, 32-38.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1.** *In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam* Dr. Kennicott complains loudly here, because of “the corruption in the name of this king of Judah, who is expressed by four different names in this chapter: Ozriah, Oziah, Ozrihu, and Ozihu. Our oldest Hebrew MS. relieves us here by reading truly, in 2 Kings 15:1, 6, 7, עֲזִיָּהוּ Uzziah, where the printed text is differently corrupted. This reading is called true, 1. Because it is supported by the Syriac and Arabic versions in these three verses. 2. Because the printed text itself has it so in 2 Kings 15:32, 34 of this very chapter. 3. Because it is so expressed in the parallel place in Chronicles; and, 4. Because it is not αζαριας, Azariah, but οζιας, Oziah, (Uzziah,) in St. Matthew's genealogy.” There are insuperable difficulties in the chronology of this place. The marginal note says, “This is the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam's partnership in the kingdom with his father, who made him consort at his going to the Syrian wars. It is the

sixteenth year of Jeroboam's monarchy." Dr. Lightfoot endeavors to reconcile this place with 2 Kings 14:16, 17, thus: "At the death of Amaziah, his son and heir Uzziah was but four years old, for he was about sixteen in Jeroboam's twenty-seventh year; therefore, the throne must have been empty eleven years, and the government administered by protectors while Uzziah was in his minority." Learned men are not agreed concerning the mode of reconciling these differences; there is probably some mistake in the numbers. I must say to all the contending chronologers:—

*Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.*

*When such men disagree, I can't decide.*

**Verse 3. *He did that which was right*** It is said, 2 Chronicles 26:5, that he sought the Lord in the days of Zechariah the prophet, and God made him to prosper; that he fought against the Philistines; broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod; prevailed over the Arabians and Mehunims; and that the Ammonites paid him tribute; and his dominion extended abroad, even to the entering in of Egypt; that he built towers in Jerusalem, at the corner gate, valley gate, and turning of the wall; and built towers also in the desert, and digged many wells; that he had a very strong and well-regulated military force, which he provided with a well-stocked arsenal; and constructed many military engines to shoot arrows and project great stones; and that his fame was universally spread abroad.

**Verse 5. *The Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper*** The reason of this plague is well told in the above quoted chapter, 2 Chronicles 26:16. That his heart being elated, he went into the temple to burn incense upon the altar, assuming to himself the functions of the high priest; that Azariah the priest, with fourscore others, went in after him, to prevent him; and that while they were remonstrating against his conduct, the Lord struck him with the leprosy, which immediately appeared on his forehead; that they thrust him out as an unclean person; and that he himself hurried to get out, feeling that the Lord had smitten him; that he was obliged to dwell in a house by himself, being leprous, to the day of his death; and that during this time the affairs of the kingdom were administered by his son Jotham. A poet, ridiculing the conduct of those who, without an episcopal

ordination, think they have authority from God to dispense all the ordinances of the Church, expresses himself thus:—

*But now the warm enthusiast cries,  
The office to myself I take;  
Offering the Christian sacrifice,  
Myself a lawful priest I make:  
To me this honor appertains,  
No need of man when GOD ordains.*

[Some go into the contrary extreme, and in affect say, no need of GOD when MAN ordains.]

*Though kings may not so far presume,  
‘Tis no presumption in a clown,  
And, lo, without a call from Rome,  
My flail or hammer I lay down;*

*And if my order’s name ye seek,  
Come, see a new Melchisedek!  
Ye upstart (men-made) priests, your sentence know,  
The marks you can no longer hide;*

*Your daring deeds too plainly show  
The loathsome leprosy of pride;  
And if ye still your crime deny,  
Who lepers live shall lepers die.*

CHARLES WESLEY.

This is very severe, but applies to every man who, through pride, presumption, or the desire of gain, enters into the priest’s office, though he have the utmost authority that the highest ecclesiastical officer can confer.

**Verse 10.** *Smote him before the people* In some public assembly: he probably became very unpopular.

**Verse 12.** *This was the word of the Lord unto Jehu* God had promised to Jehu that his sons should sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation; and so it came to pass, for Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, succeeded Jehu, to whom this promise was made. But because he executed the Divine purpose with an uncommanded cruelty, therefore God cut his family short, according to his word by Hosea, I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu; and I will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel, Hos 1:4.

**Verse 13. *He reigned a full month*** Menahem is supposed to have been one of Zachariah's generals. Hearing of the death of his master, when he was with the troops at Tirzah, he hastened to Samaria, and slew the murderer, and had himself proclaimed in his stead. But, as the people of Tiphseh did not open their gates to him, he took the place by assault; and as the text tells us, practiced the most cruel barbarities, even ripping up the women that were with child!

**Verse 19. *Pul, the king of Assyria*** This is the first time we hear of Assyria since the days of Nimrod, its founder, Genesis 10:11.

Dean Prideaux supposes that this Pul was father of the famous Sardanapalus, the son himself being called Sardan; to which, as was frequent in those times, the father's name, Pul, was added, making Sardanpul of which the Greeks and Latins made Sardanapalus; and this Pul is supposed to be the same that reigned in Nineveh when Jonah preached the terrors of the Lord to that city.

***That his hand*** That is, his power and influence, might be with him: in this sense is the word hand frequently used in Scripture.

**Verse 20. *Each man fifty shekels of silver*** Upwards of five pounds sterling a man.

**Verse 21. *Are they not written in -the chronicles*** There are no chronicles extant, in which there is any thing farther relative to this king.

**Verse 25. *Smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah*** Who Argob and Arieah were we know not; some make them men, some make them statues. Pekah had fifty Gileadites in the conspiracy with him.

**Verse 29. *Came Tiglath-pileser*** He is supposed to have been the successor of Sardanapalus: Dean Prideaux makes him the same with Arbaces, called by Aelian Thilgamus, and by Usher Ninus junior; who, together with Belesis, headed the conspiracy against Sardanapalus, and fixed his seat at Nineveh, the ancient residence of the Assyrian kings; as did Belesis, who is called, in Isaiah 39:1, Baladan, fix his at Babylon.

***Took Ijon*** These places belonged to Israel; and were taken by Ben-hadad, king of Syria, when he was in league with Asa, king of Judah. See 1 Kings

15:20. They were regained by Jeroboam the second; and now they are taken from Israel once more by Tiglath-pileser. From 1 Chronicles 5:26, we learn that Pul and Tiglath-pileser, kings of Assyria, carried away into captivity the two tribes of Reuben, and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; all that belonged to Israel, on the other side of Jordan. These were never restored to Israel.

**Verse 30. *Hoshea the son of Elah-in the twentieth year of Jotham*** There are many difficulties in the chronology of this place. To reconcile the whole, Calmet says: “Hoshea conspired against Pekah, the twentieth year of the reign of this prince, which was the eighteenth after the beginning of the reign of Jotham, king of Judah. Two years after this, that is, the fourth year of Ahaz, and the twentieth of Jotham, Hoshea made himself master of a part of the kingdom, according to 2 Kings 15:30. Finally, the twelfth year of Ahaz, Hoshea had peaceable possession of the whole kingdom, according to 2 Kings 17:1.”

**Verse 36. *Now the rest of the acts of Jotham*** These acts are distinctly stated in 2 Chronicles 27:1-9. He built the high gate of the house of the Lord, and he built much on the wall of Ophel. He built cities in the mountains of Judah; and in the forests he built castles and towers. He overthrew the Ammonites; and obliged them to give him one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley, for three consecutive years. He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years. These are the particulars which we learn from the place in Chronicles quoted above; few of which are mentioned in this place. As to the higher gate of the house of the Lord, commentators are not well agreed: some think it was a gate which he then made, and which did not exist before, and is the same that is called the new gate, Jeremiah 26:10, which is very likely.

**Verse 37. *In those days the Lord began to send*** It was about this time that the Assyrian wars, so ruinous to the Jews, began; but it was in the following reigns that they arrived at their highest pitch of disaster to those unfaithful and unfortunate people. However much we may blame the Jews for their disobedience and obstinacy, yet we cannot help feeling for them under their severe afflictions. Grievously they have sinned, and grievously have they suffered for it. And if they be still objects of God’s judgments,



there is revelation to believe that they will yet be objects of God's goodness. Many think the signs of the times are favorable to this ingathering; but there is no evidence among the people themselves that the day of their redemption is at hand. They do not humble themselves; they do not seek the Lord.

## CHAPTER 16

*Ahaz begins to reign, acts wickedly, and restores idolatry in Judea, 1-4. Rezin, king of Syria, besieges Jerusalem, but cannot take it; he takes Elath, and drives the Jews thence, 5, 6. Ahaz hires Tiglath-pileser against the king of Syria and the king of Israel, and gives him the silver and gold that were found in the treasures of the house of the Lord, 7, 8. Tiglath-pileser takes Damascus and slays Rezin, 9. Ahaz goes to meet him at Damascus: sees an altar there, a pattern of which he sends to Urijah, the priest; and orders him to make one like it, which he does, 10-15. He makes several alterations in the temple; dies; and Hezekiah his son reigns in his stead, 16-20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 2. *Twenty years old was Ahaz*** Here is another considerable difficulty in the chronology. Ahaz was but twenty years old when he began to reign, and he died after he had reigned sixteen years; consequently his whole age amounted only to thirty-six years. But Hezekiah his son was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; and if this were so, then Ahaz must have been the father of Hezekiah when he was but eleven years of age! Some think that the twenty years mentioned here respect the beginning of the reign of Jotham, father of Ahaz; so that the passage should be thus translated: Ahaz was twenty years of age when his father began to reign; and consequently he was fifty-two years old when he died, seeing Jotham reigned sixteen years: and therefore Hezekiah was born when his father was twenty-seven years of age. This however is a violent solution, and worthy of little credit. It is better to return to the text as it stands, and allow that Ahaz might be only eleven or twelve years old when he had Hezekiah: this is not at all impossible; as we know that the youth of both sexes in the eastern countries are marriageable at ten or twelve years of age, and are frequently betrothed when they are but nine. I know a woman, an East Indian, who had the second of her two first children when she was only fourteen years of age, and must have had the first when between eleven and twelve. I hold it therefore quite a possible case that

Ahaz might have had a son born to him when he was but eleven or twelve years old.

**Verse 3. *Made his son to pass through the fire*** On this passage I beg leave to refer the reader to my notes on Leviticus 18:21; 20:2, 14, where the subject is considered at large.

**Verse 5. *But could not overcome him***. It is likely that this was the time when Isaiah was sent to console Ahaz; (see Isaiah 7:1;) and predicted the death both of Rezin and Pekah, his enemies.

**Verse 6. *Recovered Elath to Syria*** See the note on 2 Kings 14:22.

**Verse 7. *I am thy servant and thy son*** I will obey thee in all, and become tributary to thee; only help me against Syria and Israel.

**Verse 9. *The king of Assyria hearkened unto him*** It is said, 2 Chronicles 28:20, that Tilgath-pilneser distressed him, but strengthened him not. Though he came against the Syrians, and took Damascus, and slew Rezin, yet he did not help Ahaz against the Philistines, nor did he lend him any forces to assist against Israel; and he distressed him by taking the royal treasures, and the treasures of the temple, and did him little service for so great a sacrifice. He helped him a little, but distressed him on the whole.

It appears that, about this time, Pekah king of Israel nearly ruined Judea: it is said, 2 Chronicles 28:6, that he slew one hundred thousand valiant men in one day; and that he carried away captive to Samaria two hundred thousand women and children, and much spoil; but, at the instance of the prophet Oded, these were all sent back, fed and clothed, 2 Chronicles 28:8-16.

**Verse 10. *Ahaz went to Damascus*** He had received so much help on the defeat of Rezin, that he went to Damascus to meet the king of Assyria, and render him thanks.

***Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar*** This was some idolatrous altar, the shape and workmanship of which pleased Ahaz so well that he determined to have one like it at Jerusalem. For this he had no Divine authority, and the compliance of Urijah was both mean and sinful. That Ahaz did this for an idolatrous purpose, is evident from 2 Chronicles 28:21-25: "For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus;-and he said, Because

the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them, that they may help me. And he made high places to burn incense to other gods in every city of Judah.”

**Verse 14. *Put it on the north side*** He seems to have intended to conform every thing in the Lord’s house as much as possible to the idolatrous temples which he saw at Damascus, and to model the Divine worship in the same way: in a word to honor and worship the gods of Syria, and not the God of heaven. All the alterations specified here were in contempt of the true God. Thus he provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers, 2 Chronicles 28:25.

**Verse 18. *And the covert for the Sabbath*** There are a great number of conjectures concerning this covert, or, as it is in the Hebrew, the מוסך musach, of the Sabbath. As the word, and others derived from the same root, signify covering or booths, it is very likely that this means either a sort of canopy which was erected on the Sabbath days for the accommodation of the people who came to worship, and which Ahaz took away to discourage them from that worship; or a canopy under which the king and his family reposed themselves, and which he transported to some other place to accommodate the king of Assyria when he visited him. Jarchi supposes that it was a sort of covert way that the kings of Judah had to the temple, and Ahaz had it removed lest the king of Assyria, going by that way, and seeing the sacred vessels, should covet them. If that way had been open, he might have gone by it into the temple, and have seen the sacred vessels, and so have asked them from a man who was in no condition to refuse them, however unwilling he might be to give them up. The removing of this, whatever it was, whether throne or canopy, or covered way, cut off the communication between the king’s house and the temple; and the king of Assyria would not attempt to go into that sacred place by that other passage to which the priests alone had access.

**Verse 20. *Was buried with his fathers in the city of David*** But it is expressly declared, 2 Chronicles 28:27, that he was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings of Israel; and this was undoubtedly intended as a mark of degradation.

His reign was disastrous and impious; and it was disastrous because it was impious. He had been a scourge, not a blessing, to his people. He had not

only made illegal alterations in the temple, and in the mode of worship prescribed by the true God, but he had polluted all the cities of Judah with idolatry, and brought ruin upon the nation. On the whole, a worse king than himself had not as yet sat on the Jewish throne; and yet he had many advantages: he had for counsellor one of the greatest men ever produced in the Jewish nation, ISAIAH the prophet; and God condescended to interpose especially for him when grievously straitened by the kings of Israel and Syria, both of whom were cut off according to the prediction of this prophet. But he would not lay it to heart, and therefore the wrath of God fell heavily upon him, and upon the stiff-necked and rebellious people whom he governed. He had sufficient warning and was without excuse. He would sin, and therefore he must suffer.

## CHAPTER 17

*Hoshea's wicked reign, 1, 2. Shalmaneser comes up against him, makes him tributary, and then casts him into prison, 3, 4. He besieges Samaria three years; and at last takes it, and carries Israel captive into Assyria, and places them in different cities of the Assyrians and Medes, 5, 6. The reason why Israel was thus afflicted; their idolatry, obstinacy, divination, etc., 7-18. Judah copies the misconduct of Israel, 19. The Lord rejects all the seed of Israel, 20-23. The king of Assyria brings different nations and places them in Samaria, and the cities from which the Israelites had been led away into captivity, 24. Many of these strange people are destroyed by lions, 25. The king of Assyria sends back some of the Israelitish priests to teach these nations the worship of Jehovah; which worship they incorporate with their own idolatry, 26-33. The state of the Israelites, and strange nations in the land of Israel, 34-41.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 3. *Shalmaneser*** This was the son and successor of Tiglath-pileser. He is called Shalman by Hosea, Hosea 10:14, and Enemessar, in the book of Tobit, 1:2.

***Gave him presents.*** Became tributary to him.

**Verse 4. *Found conspiracy to Hoshea*** He had endeavored to shake off the Assyrian yoke, by entering into a treaty with So, King of Egypt; and having done so, he ceased to send the annual tribute to Assyria.

**Verse 5. *Besieged it three years.*** It must have been well fortified, well provisioned, and well defended, to have held out so long.

**Verse 6. *Took Samaria*** According to the prophets Hosea, Hosea 13:16, and Micah, Micah 1:6. He exercised great cruelties on this miserable city, ripping up the women with child, dashing young children against the stones, etc. etc.

***Carried Israel away into Assyria*** What were the places to which the unfortunate Israelites were carried, or where their successors are now situated, have given rise to innumerable conjectures, dissertations, discourses, etc. Some maintain that they are found on the coast of Guinea; others, in America; the Indian tribes being the descendants of those carried away by the Assyrians. In vol. i. of the Supplement to Sir Wm. Jones's works, we find a translation of the History of the Afghans, by Mr. H. Vansittart; from which it appears that they derive their own descent from the Jews. On this history Sir Wm. Jones writes the following note:—

“This account of the Afghans may lead to a very interesting discovery. We learn from Esdras, that the ten tribes, after a wandering journey, came to a country called Arsaret, where we may suppose they settled. Now the Afghans are said by the best Persian historians to be descended from the Jews; they have traditions among themselves of such a descent, and it is even asserted that their families are distinguished by the names of Jewish tribes; although, since their conversion to the Islam, they studiously conceal their origin. The Pushtoo, of which I have seen a dictionary, has a manifest resemblance to the Chaldaic; and a considerable district under their dominion is called Hazarek or Hazaret, which might easily have been changed into the word used by Esdras. I strongly recommend an inquiry into the literature and history of the Afghans.” Every thing considered, I think it by far the most probable that the Afghans are the descendants of the Jews, who were led away captives by the Assyrian kings.

Thus ended the kingdom of Israel, after it had lasted two hundred and fifty-four years, from the death of Solomon and the schism of Jeroboam, till the taking of Samaria by Shalmaneser, in the ninth year of Hoshea; after which the remains of the ten tribes were carried away beyond the river Euphrates.

The rest of this chapter is spent in vindicating the Divine providence and justice; showing the reason why God permitted such a desolation to fall on a people who had been so long his peculiar children.

**Verse 9. *Did secretly those things*** There was much hidden iniquity and private idolatry among them, as well as public and notorious crimes.

***From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.*** That is, the idolatry was universal; every place was made a place for some idolatrous rite or act of worship; from the largest city to the smallest village, and from the public watchtower to the shepherd's cot.

**Verse 10. *Images and groves*** Images of different idols, and places for the abominable rites of Ashtaroth or Venus.

**Verse 13. *Yet the Lord testified against Israel*** What rendered their conduct the more inexcusable was, that the Lord had preserved among them a succession of prophets, who testified against their conduct, and preached repentance to them, and the readiness of God to forgive, provided they would return unto him, and give up their idolatries.

**Verse 17. *Sold themselves to do evil*** Abandoned themselves to the will of the devil, to work all iniquity with greediness.

**Verse 18. *Removed them out of his sight*** Banished them from the promised land, from the temple, and from every ordinance of righteousness, as wholly unworthy of any kind of good.

***None left but the tribe of Judah only.*** Under this name all those of Benjamin and Levi, and the Israelites, who abandoned their idolatries and joined with Judah, are comprised. It was the ten tribes that were carried away by the Assyrians.

**Verse 24. *The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon*** He removed one people entirely, and substituted others in their place; and this he did to cut off all occasion for mutiny or insurrection; for the people being removed from their own land, had no object worthy of attention to contend for, and no patrimony in the land of their captivity to induce them to hazard any opposition to their oppressors.

By men from Babylon, we may understand some cities of Babylonia then under the Assyrian empire; for at this time Babylon had a king of its own; but some parts of what was called Babylonia might have been still under the Assyrian government.

***From Cuthah*** This is supposed to be the same as Cush, the Chaldeans and Syrians changing ש shin into ט tau; thus they make כוש Cush into



**כּוּת** Cuth; and **אַשּׁוּר** shshur, Assyria, into **אַתּוּר** Attur. From these came the Scythae; and from these the Samaritans were called Cuthaeans, and their language Cuthite. The original language of this people, or at least the language they spoke after their settlement in Israel, is contained in the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch, printed under the Hebraeo-Samaritan in vol. i. of the London Polyglot. This Cuthah was probably the country in the land of Shinar, first inhabited by Cush.

**From Ava** The Avim were an ancient people, expelled by the Caphtorim from Hazerim, Deuteronomy 2:23.

**From Hamath** This was Hemath or Emath of Syria, frequently mentioned in the sacred writings.

**From Sepharvaim** There was a city called Syphera, near the Euphrates; others think the Saspire, a people situated between the Colchians and the Medes, are meant. There is much uncertainty relative to these places: all that we know is, that the Assyrians carried away the Israelites into Assyria, and placed them in cities and districts called Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, 2 Kings 17:6; and it is very likely that they brought some of the inhabitants of those places into the cities of Israel.

**Verse 25. The Lord sent lions among them** The land being deprived of its inhabitants, wild beasts would necessarily increase, even without any supernatural intervention; and this the superstitious new comers supposed to be a plague sent upon them, because they did not know how to worship him who was the God of the land; for they thought, like other heathens that every district had its own tutelary deity. Yet it is likely that God did send lions as a scourge on this bad people.

**Verse 26. The manner of the God of the land.** **מִשְׁפַּט** mishpat, the judgment; the way in which the God of the land is to be worshipped.

**Verse 27. Carry thither one of the priests** Imperfect as this teaching was, it, in the end, overthrew the idolatry of these people, so that soon after the Babylonish captivity they were found to be as free from idolatry as the Jews themselves, and continue so to the present day. But they are now nearly annihilated: the small remains of them is found at Naplouse and

Jaffa; they are about thirty families; and men, women, and children, amount to about two hundred persons! They have a synagogue, which they regularly attend every Sabbath; and they go thither clothed in white robes. The reader may find much curious information relative to this people, in a Memoire sur L'Etat actuel des Samaritains, by Baron Sylvestre de Sacy, 8vo., Paris, 1812.

**Verse 29. *Every nation made gods of their own*** That is, they made gods after the fashion of those which they had worshipped in their own country.

**Verse 30. *The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth*** This, literally, signifies the tabernacles of the daughters or young women, and most evidently refers to those public prostitutions of young virgins at the temple of Melitta or Venus among the Babylonians. See at the end of the chapter. {2 Kings 17:31} From benoth it is probable that the word Venus came, the B being changed into V, as is frequently the case, and the th into s, benoth, Venos. The rabbins say that her emblem was a hen with her chickens; see Jarchi on the place.

***The men of Cuth made Nergal*** This is supposed to have been the solar orb or light. According to the rabbins, his emblem was a cock. See at the end of the chapter. {2 Kings 17:31}

***The men of Hamath made Ashima*** Perhaps the fire; from אֲשָׁמָה ashama, to make atonement or to purify. Jarchi says this was in the form of a goat. See below. {2 Kings 17:41}

**Verse 31. *The Avites made Nibhaz*** This was supposed to be the same as the Anubis of the Egyptians; and was in form partly of a dog, and partly of a man. A very ancient image of this kind now lies before me: it is cut out of stone, about seven inches high; has the body, legs, and arms, of a man; the head and feet of a dog; the thighs and legs covered with scales; the head crowned with a tiara; the arms crossed upon the breasts, with the fingers clenched. The figure stands upright, and the belly is very protuberant. See below.

***And Tartak*** This is supposed by some to be another name of the same idol; Jarchi says it was in the shape of an ass. Some think these were the

representations of the sun in his chariot; Nibhaz representing the solar orb, and Tartak the chariot. See below.

**Adrammelech** From אדר *adar*, glorious, and מלך *melech*, king. Probably the sun.

**Anammelech** From anah, to return, and מלך *melech*, king. Probably, the Moloch of the Ammonites. Jarchi says, the first was in the form of a mule, the second in the form of a horse; this was probably the moon.

**Verse 32. *Of the lowest of them priests*** One priest was not enough for this motley population; and, as the priesthood was probably neither respectable nor lucrative, it was only the lowest of the people who would enter into the employment.

**Verse 33. *They feared the Lord, and served their own gods*** They did not relinquish their own idolatry but incorporated the worship of the true God with that of their idols. They were afraid of Jehovah, who had sent lions among them; and therefore they offered him a sort of worship that he might not thus afflict them: but they served other gods, devoted themselves affectionately to them, because their worship was such as gratified their grossest passions, and most sinful propensities.

**Verse 36. *But the Lord*** JEHOVAH, the supreme, self-existent, and eternal Being; author of all being and life. This was to be the sole object of their adoration.

***Who brought you up*** This was a strong reason why they should adore Him only: he had saved them from the hands of their enemies, and he did it in such a way as to show his power to be irresistible; in such a Being they might safely confide.

***Him shall ye fear*** Here is the manner in which he is to be worshipped. Him ye shall reverence as your Lawgiver and Judge; ye shall respect and keep all his commandments; doing what he has enjoined, and avoiding what he has forbidden.

***Him shall ye worship*** Before Him ye shall bow the knee; living in the spirit of obedience, and performing every religious act in the deepest humility.

**And to him shall ye do sacrifice.** Ye shall consider that, as ye have sinned, so ye deserve death; ye shall therefore bring your living victims to the altar of the Lord, and let their life's blood be poured out there, as an atonement for your souls. We see in this verse three important points: 1. The object of their worship. 2. The reasons of that worship; and, 3. The spirit and manner in which it was to be performed: viz., 1. In fear, 2. Humility; and, 3. By sacrifice.

**Verse 41. So do they unto this day.** This must have been written before the Babylonish captivity; because, after that time, none of the Israelites ever lapsed into idolatry. But this may chiefly refer to the heathenish people who were sent to dwell among the remains of the ten tribes.

ON these nations and the objects of their worship, I present my readers with the following extracts from Dodd and Parkhurst.

**Ver. 30.** The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth. We have here an account of the idols which were consecrated by the different nations, transplanted by the king of Assyria to Samaria. It is difficult, however, and has afforded a large field for conjecture, to give any satisfactory account concerning them. The reader will find in Selden, Vossius, and Jurieu, much upon the subject. Succoth-benoth may be literally translated, The Tabernacles of the Daughters, or Young Women; or if Benoth be taken as the name of a female idol, from בנה to build up, procreate children, then the words will express the tabernacles sacred to the productive powers feminine. And, agreeably to this latter exposition, the rabbins say that the emblem was a hen and chickens. But however this may be, there is no room to doubt that these succoth were tabernacles wherein young women exposed themselves to prostitution in honor of the Babylonish goddess Melitta. Herodotus, (lib. i., c. 199,) gives us a particular account of this detestable service. "Every young woman," says he, "of the country of Babylon must once in her life sit at the temple of Venus, [whom he afterwards tells us the Assyrians called Melitta,] and prostitute herself to some stranger. Those who are rich, and so disdain to mingle with the crowd, present themselves before the temple in covered chariots, attended by a great retinue. But the generality of the women sit near the temple, having crowns upon their heads, and holding a cord, some continually coming, others going. [See Baruch vi. 43.] The cords are held by them in

such a manner as to afford a free passage among the women, that the strangers may choose whom they like. A woman who has once seated herself in this place must not return home till some stranger has cast money into her lap, and led her from the temple, and defiled her. The stranger who throws the money must say, 'I invoke the goddess Melitta for thee.' The money, however small a sum it may be, must not be refused, because it is appointed to sacred uses. [See Deuteronomy 23:18.] The woman must follow the first man that offers, and not reject him; and after prostitution, having now duly honored the goddess, she is dismissed to her own house. In Cyprus," adds the historian, "they have the same custom." This abomination, implied by Succoth-benoth, the men of Babylon brought with them into the country of Samaria; and both the name of the idol Melitta, and the execrable service performed to her honor, show that by Melitta was originally intended the procreative or productive power of nature, the Venus of the Greeks and Romans. See the beginning of Lucretius's first book Deuteronomy Rerum Natura. Mr. Selden imagines that some traces of the Succoth-benoth may be found in Sicca Veneria, the name of a city of Numidia, not far from the borders of Africa Propria. The name itself bears a near allusion to the obscene custom above taken notice of, and seems to have been transported from Phoenicia: nor can this well be disputed, when we consider that here was a temple where women were obliged to purchase their marriage-money by the prostitution of their bodies. See Univ. Hist., vol. xvii., p. 295, and Parkhurst's Lexicon on the word **קס**.

The men of Cuth made Nergal. — Cuth was a province of Assyria, which, according to some, lies upon the Araxis: but others rather think it to be the same with Cush, which is said by Moses to be encompassed with the river Gihon; and must, therefore, be the same with the country which the Greeks call Susiana, and which to this day is called by the inhabitants Chusesta. Their idol, Nergal, seems to have been the sun, as the causer of the diurnal and annual revolutions of the planets; for it is naturally derived from **נר** ner, light, and by **גל** gal, to revolve. The rabbins say that the idol was represented in the shape of a cock; and probably they tell us the truth, for this seems a very proper emblem. Among the latter heathens we find the cock was sacred to Apollo or the sun, (see Pierii Hieroglyph., p. 223,) "because," says Heliodorus, speaking of the time when cocks crow, "by a

natural sensation of the sun's revolution to us, they are incited to salute the god." AETHIOP. lib. i. And perhaps under this name, Nergal, they meant to worship the sun, not only for the diurnal return of its light upon the earth, but also for its annual return or revolution. We may observe that the emblem, a cock, is affected by the latter as well as by the former, and is frequently crowing both day and night, when the days begin to lengthen. See Calmet's Dictionary under the word, and Parkhurst's Lexicon.

The men of Hamath made Ashima. — There are several cities and countries which go under the name of Hamath; but what we take to be here meant is that province of Syria which lies upon the Orontes, wherein there was a city of the same name; which when Shalmaneser had taken, he removed the inhabitants from thence into Samaria. Their idol Ashima signifies the atoner or expiator, from אָשָׁם asham. The word is in a Chaldee form, and seems to be the same as אֲשַׁמַּת שְׁמֶרֶן ashmath Shomeron, the sin of Samaria, mentioned Amos 8:14, where ashmath is rendered by the LXX. propitiation. It is known to every one who has the least acquaintance with the mythology of the heathen, how strongly and universally they retained the tradition of an atonement or expiation for sin, although they expected it from a false object and wrong means. We find it expressed in very clear terms among the Romans even so late as the time of Horace, lib. i., ode 2:—

*Cui dabit partes scelus expiandi Jupiter?*

*And whom, to expiate the horrid guilt, Will Jove appoint?*

The answer is, "Apollo," the god of light. Some think that, as Asuman or Suman, (Persian) asman, in the Persian language, signifies heaven, the Syrians might from hence derive the name of this god; who, they suppose, was represented by a large stone pillar terminating in a conic or pyramidal figure, whereby they denoted fire. See Parkhurst on the word אָשָׁם asham, Calmet's Dictionary, and Tennison on Idolatry.

**Ver. 31.** The Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak. — It is uncertain who these Avites were. The most probable opinion seems to be that which Grotius has suggested by observing that there are a people in Bactriana, mentioned by Ptolemy, under the name of Avidia, who possibly might be those transported at this time into Palestine by Shalmaneser. Nibhaz, according

to the rabbins, had the shape of a dog, much like the Anubis of the Egyptians. In Pierius's Hieroglyphics, p. 53, is the figure of a cunoccephalus, a kind of ape, with a head like a dog, standing upon his hinder feet, and looking earnestly at the moon. Pierius there teaches us that the cunoccephalus was an animal eminently sacred amongst the Egyptians, hieroglyphical of the moon, and kept in their temples to inform them of the moon's conjunction with the sun, at which time this animal is strangely affected, being deprived of sight, refusing food, and lying sick on the ground; but on the moon's appearance seeming to return thanks, and congratulate the return of light both to himself and her. See Johnston's Nat. Hist. de Quadruped., p. 100. This being observed, the נבחז nibchaz, (which may well be derived from נבח)

The Sepharvites burned their children-to Adrammelech and Anammelech. — As these Sepharvites probably came from the cities of the Medes, whither the Israelites were carried captive, and as Herodotus tells us that between Colchis and Media are found a people called Saspises, in all likelihood they were the same with those here named Sepharvites. Moloch, Milcom, and Melech, in the language of different nations, all signify a king, and imply the sun, which was called the king of heaven; and consequently the addition of אַדָר *adar*, which signifies powerful, illustrious, to the one, and of עֲנָה *anah*, which implies to return, to answer, to the other, means no more than the mighty or the oracular Moloch. And as the children were offered to him, it appears that he was the same with the Moloch of the Ammonites. See Univ. Hist. and Calmet. Mr. Locke is also of opinion that these two names were expressive of one and the same deity. What they were, or in what form, and how worshipped, we have not light from antiquity to determine.



## CHAPTER 18

*Hezekiah begins to reign; he removes the high places, breaks to pieces the brazen serpent, and walks uprightly before God, 1-6. He endeavors to shake off the Assyrian yoke, and defeats the Philistines, 7, 8.*

*Shalmaneser comes up against Samaria, takes it, and carries the people away into captivity, 9-12. And then comes against Judah, and takes all the fenced cities, 13. Hezekiah sends a message to him at Lachish to desist, with the promise that he will pay him any tribute he chooses to impose; in consequence of which Shalmaneser exacts three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold; to pay which Hezekiah is obliged to take all his own treasures, and those belonging to the temple, 14-16. The king of Assyria sends, notwithstanding, a great host against Jerusalem; and his general, Rab-shakeh, delivers an insulting and blasphemous message to Hezekiah, 17-35. Hezekiah and his people are greatly afflicted at the words of Rab-shakeh, 36, 37.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1.** *Now-in the third year of Hoshea* See the note on 2 Kings 16:1, where this chronology is considered.

**Verse 3.** *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord* In 2 Kings 29:1-36 of the second book of Chronicles, we have an account of what this pious king did to restore the worship of God. He caused the priests and Levites to cleanse the holy house, which had been shut up by his father Ahaz, and had been polluted with filth of various kinds; and this cleansing required no less than sixteen days to accomplish it. As the passover, according to the law, must be celebrated the fourteenth of the first month, and the Levites could not get the temple cleansed before the sixteenth day, he published the passover for the fourteenth of the second month, and sent through all Judah and Israel to collect all the men that feared God, that the passover might be celebrated in a proper manner. The concourse was great, and the feast was celebrated with great magnificence. When the people returned to their respective cities and villages, they began to throw down

the idol altars, statues, images, and groves, and even to abolish the high places; the consequence was that a spirit of piety began to revive in the land, and a general reformation took place.

**Verse 4. Brake in pieces the brazen serpent.** The history of this may be seen in Numbers 21:8, 9; see the notes there.

We find that this brazen serpent had become an object of idolatry, and no doubt was supposed to possess, as a telem or amulet, extraordinary virtues, and that incense was burnt before it which should have been burnt before the true God.

**And he called it Nehushtan.** נְהֻשְׁתָּן. Not one of the versions has attempted to translate this word. Jarchi says, “He called it Nechustan, through contempt, which is as much as to say, a brazen serpent.” Some have supposed that the word is compounded of נָחַשׁ nachash, to divine, and טָן tan, a serpent, so it signifies the divining serpent; and the Targum states that it was the people, not Hezekiah, that gave it this name. נָחַשׁ nachash signifies to view, eye attentively, observe, to search, inquire accurately, etc.; and hence is used to express divination, augury. As a noun it signifies brass or copper, filth, verdigris, and some sea animal, Amos 9:3; see also Job 26:13, and Isaiah 26:1. It is also frequently used for a serpent; and most probably for an animal of the genus Simia, in Genesis 3:1, where see the notes. This has been contested by some, ridiculed by a few, and believed by many. The objectors, because it signifies a serpent sometimes, suppose it must have the same signification always! And one to express his contempt and show his sense, has said, “Did Moses hang up an ape on a pole?” I answer, No, no more than he hanged up you, who ask the contemptible question. But this is of a piece with the conduct of the people of Milan, who show you to this day the brazen serpent which Moses hung up in the wilderness, and which Hezekiah broke in pieces two thousand five hundred years ago!

Of serpents there is a great variety. Allowing that נָחַשׁ nachash signifies a serpent, I may ask in my turn, What kind of a serpent was it that tempted Eve? Of what species was that which Moses hung up on the pole, and which Hezekiah broke to pieces? Who of the wise men can answer these questions? Till this is done I assert, that the word, Genesis 3:1, etc., does

not signify a serpent of any kind; and that with a creature of the genus Simia the whole account best agrees.

**Verse 5. *He trusted in the Lord*** See the character of this good king: 1. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; 2. He clave to the Lord; 3. He was steady in his religion; he departed not from following the Lord; 4. He kept God's commandments. And what were the consequences? 1. The Lord was with him; 2. He prospered whithersoever he went.

**Verse 8. *From the tower of the watchmen*** See the same words, 2 Kings 17:9. It seems a proverbial mode of expression: he reduced every kind of fortification; nothing was able to stand before him.

**Verse 9. *In the fourth year*** This history has been already given, 2 Kings 17:3, etc.

**Verse 17. *The king of Assyria sent Tartan, etc.*** Calmet has very justly remarked that these are not the names of persons, but of offices. Tartan, **תרתן** tartan or tantan, as in the parallel place in Isaiah, in the Greek version, signifies he who presides over the gifts or tribute; chancellor of the exchequer.

**Rabsaris** **רב סריס**, the chief of the eunuchs. Rab-shakeh, **רב שקה** master or chief over the wine cellar; or he who had the care of the king's drink.

**From Lachish** It seems as if the Assyrian troops had been worsted before Lachish, and were obliged to raise the siege, from which they went and sat down before Libnah. While Sennacherib was there with the Assyrian army, he heard that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, had invaded the Assyrian territories. Being obliged therefore to hasten, in order to succor his own dominions, he sent a considerable force under the aforementioned officers against Jerusalem, with a most fearful and bloody manifesto, commanding Hezekiah to pay him tribute, to deliver up his kingdom to him, and to submit, he and his people, to be carried away captives into Assyria! This manifesto was accompanied with the vilest insults, and the highest blasphemies. God interposed and the evils threatened against others fell upon himself.

Manifestoes of this kind have seldom been honorable to the senders. The conduct of Rab-shakeh was unfortunately copied by the Duke of Brunswick, commander-in-chief of the allied army of the center, in the French revolution, who was then in the plains of Champagne, August 27, 1792, at the head of ninety thousand men, Prussians, Austrians, and emigrants, on his way to Paris, which in his manifesto he threatened to reduce to ashes! This was the cause of the dreadful massacres which immediately took place. And shortly after this time the blast of God fell upon him, for in Sept. 20 of the same year, (three weeks after issuing the manifesto,) almost all his army was destroyed by a fatal disease, and himself obliged to retreat from the French territories with shame and confusion. This, and some other injudicious steps taken by the allies, were the cause of the ruin of the royal family of France, and of enormities and calamities the most extensive, disgraceful, and ruinous, that ever stained the page of history. From all such revolutions God in mercy save mankind!

**Conduit of the upper pool** The aqueduct that brought the water from the upper or eastern reservoir, near to the valley of Kidron, into the city. Probably they had seized on this in order to distress the city.

**The fuller's field.** The place where the washermen stretched out their clothes to dry.

**Verse 18. Called to the king** They wished him to come out that they might get possession of his person.

**Eliakim-over the household** What we would call lord chamberlain.

**Shebna the scribe** The king's secretary.

**Joah-the recorder.** The writer of the public annals.

**Verse 19. What confidence is this** **מה הבטחו הזה** ma habbittachon hazzeh. The words are excessively insulting: What little, foolish, or unavailing cause of confidence is it, to which thou trustest? I translate thus, because I consider the word **בטחו** bittachon as a diminutive, intended to express the utmost contempt for Hezekiah's God.

**Verse 21. *The staff of this bruised reed*** Egypt had already been greatly bruised and broken, through the wars carried on against it by the Assyrians.

**Verse 22. *Whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away*** This was artfully malicious. Many of the people sacrificed to Jehovah on the high places; Hezekiah had removed them, (2 Kings 18:4,) because they were incentives to idolatry: Rab-shakeh insinuates that by so doing he had offended Jehovah, deprived the people of their religious rights, and he could neither expect the blessing of God nor the cooperation of the people.

**Verse 23. *I will deliver thee two thousand horses*** Another insult: Were I to give thee two thousand Assyrian horses, thou couldst not find riders for them. How then canst thou think that thou shalt be able to stand against even the smallest division of my troops?

**Verse 25. *Amos I now come up without the Lord*** As Rab-shakeh saw that the Jews placed the utmost confidence in God, he wished to persuade them that by Hezekiah's conduct Jehovah had departed from them, and was become ally to the king of Assyria, and therefore they could not expect any help from that quarter.

**Verse 26. *Talk not with us in the Jews' language*** The object of this blasphemous caitiff was to stir up the people to sedition, that the city and the king might be delivered into his hand.

**Verse 27. *That they may eat their own dung*** That they may be duly apprised, if they hold on Hezekiah's side, Jerusalem shall be most straitly besieged, and they be reduced to such a state of famine as to be obliged to eat their own excrements.

**Verse 28. *Hear the word of the great king-of Assyria*** This was all intended to cause the people to revolt from their allegiance to their king.

**Verse 32. *Until I come and take you away*** This was well calculated to stir up a seditious spirit. Ye cannot be delivered; your destruction, if ye resist, is inevitable; Sennacherib will do with you, as he does with all the nations he conquers, lead you captive into another land: but if you will

surrender without farther trouble, he will transport you into a land as good as your own.

**Verse 34. *Where are the gods of Hamath*** Sennacherib is greater than any of the gods of the nations. The Assyrians have already overthrown the gods of Hamath, Arpad, Hena, and Ivah; therefore, Jehovah shall be like one of them, and shall not be able to deliver Jerusalem out of the hand of my master.

The impudent blasphemy of this speech is without parallel. Hezekiah treated it as he ought: it was not properly against him, but against the LORD; therefore he refers the matter to Jehovah himself, who punishes this blasphemy in the most signal manner.

**Verse 36. *Answer him not.*** The blasphemy is too barefaced; Jehovah is insulted, not you; let him avenge his own quarrel. See the succeeding chapter.

**Verse 37. *Then came Eliakim-and Shebna-and Joah-to Hezekiah with their clothes rent*** It was the custom of the Hebrews, when they heard any blasphemy, to rend their clothes, because this was the greatest of crimes, as it immediately affected the majesty of God, and it was right that a religious people should have in the utmost abhorrence every insult offered to the object of their religious worship. These three ambassadors lay the matter before the king as God's representative; he lays it before the prophet, as God's minister; and the prophet lays it before God, as the people's mediator.

## CHAPTER 19

*Hezekiah as greatly distressed, and sends to Isaiah to pray for him, 1-4. Isaiah returns a comfortable answer, and predicts the destruction of the king of Assyria and his army, 5-8. Sennacherib, hearing that his kingdom was invaded by the Ethiopians, sends a terrible letter to Hezekiah, to induce him to surrender, 9-13. Hezekiah goes to the temple, spreads the letter before the Lord, and makes a most affecting prayer, 14-19. Isaiah is sent to him to assure him that his prayer is heard; that Jerusalem shall be delivered; and that the Assyrians shall be destroyed, 20-34. That very night a messenger of God slays one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians, 35. Sennacherib returns to Nineveh, and is slain by his own sons, 36, 37.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 2.** *To Isaiah the prophet* His fame and influence were at this time

οφρα οι αιμ' ετι θερμον ανηνοθεν εξ ωτειλης·  
 λυταρ επει το μεν ελκος ετερσετο παυσατο δ' αιμα,  
 οξειαι οδυναι δυνον μενος ατρειδαο·  
 ως δ' οταν ωδινουσαν εχη βελος οξυ γυναικα,  
 δριμυ, το τε προεισι μογοστοκοι ειλειθυιαι  
 ἤρης θυγατερες πικ ρας ωδινας εχουσαι·  
 ὡς οξει' οδυναι δυνον μενος ατρειδαο.

Il. xi., ver. 266.

*This, while yet warm, distill'd the purple flood;  
 But when the wound grew stiff with clotted blood,*

*Then grinding tortures his strong bosom rend.  
 Less keen those darts the fierce Ilythiae send,*

*The powers that cause the teeming matron's throes,  
 Sad mothers of unutterable woes.*

POPE

Better translated by Macpherson; but in neither well: "So long as from the gaping wound gushed forth, in its warmth, the blood; but when the wound became dry, when ceased the blood to flow amain, sharp pains pervade the strength of Atrides. Racking pangs glide through his frame; as when the Ilythiae, who preside over births, the daughters of white armed Juno, fierce dealers of bitter pains, throw all their darts on hapless women, that travail with child. Such pains pervade the strength of Atrides."

**Verse 4. *The remnant that are left*** That is, the Jews; the ten tribes having been already carried away captive by the kings of Assyria.

**Verse 7. *Behold, I will send a blast-and he shall hear a rumor*** The rumor was, that Tirhakah had invaded Assyria. The blast was that which slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand of them in one night, see 2 Kings 19:35.

***Cause him to fall by the sword*** Alluding to his death by the hands of his two sons, at Nineveh. See 2 Kings 19:35-37.

**Verse 8. *Libnah-Lachish***. These two places were not very distant from each other; they were in the mountains of Judah, southward of Jerusalem.



**Verse 10. *Let not thy God in whom thou trustest*** This letter is nearly the same with the speech delivered by Rab-shakeh. See 2 Kings 18:29.

**Verse 14. *Spread it before the Lord*** The temple was considered to be God's dwelling-place; and that whatever was there was peculiarly under his eye. Hezekiah spread the letter before the Lord, as he wished him to read the blasphemies spoken against himself.

**Verse 15. *Thou art the God, etc.*** Thou art not only God of Israel, but God also of Assyria, and of all the nations of the world.

**Verse 21. *The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.*** "So truly contemptible is thy power, and empty thy boasts, that even the young women of Jerusalem, under the guidance of Jehovah, shall be amply sufficient to discomfit all thy forces, and cause thee to return with shame to thy own country, where the most disgraceful death awaits thee."

When Bishop Warburton had published his Doctrine of Grace, and chose to fall foul on some of the most religious people of the land, a young woman of the city of Gloucester exposed his graceless system in a pamphlet, to which she affixed the above words as a motto!

**Verse 23. *The tall cedar trees-the choice fir trees*** Probably meaning the princes and nobles of the country.

***The forest of his Carmel.*** Better in the margin: the forest and his fruitful field.

**Verse 24. *I have dipped and drunk strange waters*** I have conquered strange countries, in which I have digged wells for my army; or, I have gained the wealth of strange countries.

***With the sole of my feet*** My infantry have been so numerous that they alone have been sufficient to drink up the rivers of the places I have besieged.

**Verse 25. *Hast thou not heard*** Here Jehovah speaks, and shows this boasting king that what he had done was done by the Divine appointment, and that of his own counsel and might he could have done nothing. It was

because God had appointed them to this civil destruction that he had overcome them; and it was not through his might; for God had made their inhabitants of small power, so that he only got the victory over men whom God had confounded, dismayed, and enervated, 2 Kings 19:26.

**Verse 28. *I will put my hook in thy nose*** This seems to be an allusion to the method of guiding a buffalo; he has a sort of ring put into his nose, to which a cord or bridle is attached, by which he can be turned to the right, or to the left, or round about, according to the pleasure of his driver.

**Verse 29. *This shall be a sign unto thee*** To Hezekiah; for to him this part of the address is made.

***Ye shall eat this year*** Sennacherib had ravaged the country, and seed-time was now over, yet God shows them that he would so bless the land, that what should grow of itself that year, would be quite sufficient to supply the inhabitants and prevent all famine; and though the second year was the sabbatical rest or jubilee for the land, in which it was unlawful to plough or sow; yet even then the land, by an especial blessing of God, should bring forth a sufficiency for its inhabitants; and in the third year they should sow and plant, etc. and have abundance, etc. Now this was to be a sign to Hezekiah, that his deliverance had not been effected by natural or casual means; for as without a miracle the ravaged and uncultivated land could not yield food for its inhabitants, so not without miraculous interference could the Assyrian army be cut off and Israel saved.

**Verse 30. *The remnant shall yet again take root*** As your corn shall take root in the soil, and bring forth and abundantly multiply itself, so shall the Jewish people; the population shall be greatly increased, and the desolations occasioned by the sword soon be forgotten.

**Verse 31. *Out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant*** The Jews shall be so multiplied as not only to fill Jerusalem, but all the adjacent country.

***And they that escape out of Mount Zion*** Some think that this refers to the going forth of the apostles to the Gentile world, and converting the nations by the preaching of the Gospel.

**Verse 32. *He shall not, etc.*** Here follow the fullest proofs that Jerusalem shall not be taken by the Assyrians. 1. He shall not come into this city; 2.

He shall not be able to get so near as to shoot an arrow into it; 3. He shall not be able to bring an army before it, 4. Nor shall he be able to raise any redoubt or mound against it; 5. No; not even an Assyrian shield shall be seen in the country; not even a foraging party shall come near the city.

**Verse 33. *By the way that he came*** Though his army shall not return, yet he shall return to Assyria; for because of his blasphemy he is reserved for a more ignominious death.

**Verse 35. *That night*** The very night after the blasphemous message had been sent, and this comfortable prophecy delivered.

***The angel of the Lord went out*** I believe this angel or messenger of the Lord was simply a suffocating or pestilential WIND; by which the Assyrian army was destroyed, as in a moment, without noise confusion or any warning. See the note 1 Kings 20:30. Thus was the threatening, 2 Kings 19:7, fulfilled, I will send a BLAST upon him; for he had heard the rumor that his territories were invaded; and on his way to save his empire, in one night the whole of his army was destroyed, without any one even seeing who had hurt them. This is called an angel or messenger of the Lord: that is, something immediately sent by him to execute his judgments.

***When they arose early*** That is, Sennacherib, and probably a few associates, who were preserved as witnesses and relaters of this most dire disaster. Rab-shakeh, no doubt, perished with the rest of the army.

**Verse 36. *Dwelt at Nineveh.*** This was the capital of the Assyrian empire.

**Verse 37. *Nisroch his god*** We know nothing of this deity; he is nowhere else mentioned.

***Smote him with the sword*** The rabbins say that his sons had learned that he intended to sacrifice them to this god, and that they could only prevent this by slaying him.

The same writers add, that he consulted his wise men how it was that such miracles should be wrought for the Israelites; who told him that it was because of the merit of Abraham who had offered his only son to God: he then said, I will offer to him my two sons; which when they heard, they

rose up and slew him. When a rabbin cannot untie a knot, he feels neither scruple nor difficulty to cut it.

## CHAPTER 20

*Hezekiah's sickness, and the message of the prophet to him, to prepare for death, 1. His distress and prayer to God, 2, 3. The Lord hears, and promises to add fifteen years to his life, and Isaiah prescribes a means of cure, 4-7. Hezekiah seeks a sign; and to assure him of the truth of God's promise, the shadow on the dial of Ahaz goes back ten degrees, 8-11. The King of Babylon sends a friendly message to Hezekiah, to congratulate him on his recovery; and to these messengers he ostentatiously shows all his treasures, 12, 13. Isaiah reproves him, and foretells that the Babylonians will come and take away all those treasures, and take the people into captivity; and degrade the royal family of Judah, 14-18. Hezekiah bows to the Divine judgment, 19. His acts and death, 20, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 1. *Set thine house in order*** It appears from the text that he was smitten with such a disorder as must terminate in death, without the miraculous interposition of God: and he is now commanded to set his house in order, or to give charge concerning his house; to dispose of his affairs, or in other words, to make his will; because his death was at hand. "This sickness," says Jarchi, "took place three days before the defeat of Sennacherib." That it must have been before this defeat, is evident. Hezekiah reigned only twenty-nine years, 2 Kings 18:2. He had reigned fourteen years when the war with Sennacherib began, 2 Kings 18:13, and he reigned fifteen years after this sickness, 2 Kings 20:6; therefore  $14+15=29$ , the term of his reign. Nothing can be clearer than this, that Hezekiah had reigned fourteen years before this time; and that he did live the fifteen years here promised. That Hezekiah's sickness happened before the destruction of Sennacherib's army, is asserted by the text itself: see 2 Kings 20:6.

**Verse 3. *I beseech thee, O Lord*** Hezekiah knew that, although the words of Isaiah were delivered to him in an absolute form, yet they were to be conditionally understood, else he could not have prayed to God to reverse

a purpose which he knew to be irrevocable. Even this passage is a key to many prophecies and Divine declarations: see chap. 18 of Jeremiah.

Hezekiah pleads his uprightness and holy conduct in his own behalf. Was it impious to do so? No; but it certainly did not savor much either of humility or of a due sense of his own weakness. If he had a perfect heart, who made it such?-God. If he did good in God's sights who enabled him to do so?-God. Could he therefore plead in his behalf dispositions and actions which he could neither have felt nor practiced but by the power of the grace of God? I trow not. But the times of this ignorance God winked at. The Gospel teaches us a different lesson.

**Wept sore.** How clouded must his prospects of another world have been! But it is said that, as he saw the nation in danger from the Assyrian army, which was then invading it, and threatened to destroy the religion of the true God, he was greatly affected at the news of his death, as he wished to live to see the enemies of God overthrown. And therefore God promises that he will deliver the city out of the hands of the king of Assyria, at the same time that he promises him a respite of fifteen years, 2 Kings 20:6. His lamentation on this occasion may be seen in Isaiah, Isaiah 38:9-22.

**Verse 4. Into the middle court** הַצֵּר hatstser, the court. This is the reading of the Masoretic Keri: הַעִיר haair, "of the city," is the reading of the text, and of most MSS.; but the versions follow the Keri.

**Verse 6. I will add unto thy days fifteen years** This is the first and only man who was ever informed of the term of his life. And was this a privilege! Surely no. If Hezekiah was attached to life, as he appears to have been, how must his mind be affected to mark the sinking years! He knew he was to die at the end of fifteen years; and how must he feel at the end of every year, when he saw that so much was cut off from life? He must necessarily feel a thousand deaths in fearing one. I believe there would be nothing wanting to complete the misery of men, except the place of torment, were they informed of the precise time in which their lives must terminate. God, in his abundant mercy, has hidden this from their eyes.

**Verse 7. Take a lump of figs-and laid it on the boil** We cannot exactly say in what Hezekiah's malady consisted. שֶׁחִין shechin signifies any

inflammatory tumour, boil, abscess, etc. The versions translate it sore, wound, and such like. Some think it was a pleurisy; others, that it was the plague; others, the elephantiasis; and others, that it was a quinsy. A poultice of figs might be very proper to maturate a boil, or to discuss any obstinate inflammatory swelling. This Pliny remarks, *Omnibus quae maturanda ant discutienda sunt imponuntur*. But we cannot pronounce on the propriety of the application, unless we were certain of the nature of the malady. This, however was the natural means which God chose to bless to the recovery of Hezekiah's health; and without this interposition he must have died.

**Verse 8. *What shall be the sign*** He wished to be fully convinced that his cure was to be entirely supernatural; and, in order to this, he seeks one miracle to prove the truth of the other, that nothing might remain equivocal.

**Verse 11. *He brought the shadow ten degrees backward*** We cannot suppose that these ten degrees meant ten hours; there were ten divisions of time on this dial: and perhaps it would not be right to suppose that the sun went ten degrees back in the heavens, or that the earth turned back upon its axis from east to west, in a contrary direction to its natural course. But the miracle might be effected by means of refraction, for a ray of light we know can be varied or refracted from a right line by passing through a dense medium; and we know also, by means of the refracting power of the atmosphere, the sun, when near rising and setting, seems to be higher above the horizon than he really is, and, by horizontal refraction, we find that the sun appears above the horizon when he is actually below it, and literally out of sight: therefore, by using dense clouds or vapors, the rays of light in that place might be refracted from their direct course ten, or any other number of degrees; so that the miracle might have been wrought by occasioning this extraordinary refraction, rather than by disturbing the course of the earth, or any other of the celestial bodies.

***The dial of Ahaz.*** See the note on 2 Kings 9:13, and the observations and diagram at the end of this chapter. {2 Kings 20:20}

**Verse 12. *At that time Berodach-baladan*** He is called Merodach-Baladan, Isaiah 39:1, and by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and by several of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.;

and also by the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds. The true reading seems to be Merodach; the מ mem and כ both might be easily interchanged, and so produce the mistake.

**Sent letters and a present** It appears that there was friendship between the king of Babylon and Hezekiah, when the latter and the Assyrians were engaged in a destructive war. The king of Babylon had not only heard of his sickness, but he had heard of the miracle; as we learn from 2 Chronicles 32:31.

**Verse 13. Hezekiah hearkened unto them** Instead of וישמע vaiyishma, he hearkened, וישמח vaiyismach, he rejoiced or was glad, is the reading of twelve of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., the parallel place, Isaiah 39:2, the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, Arabic, some copies of the Targum, and the Babylonian Talmud.

**All the house of his precious things** Interpreters are not well agreed about the meaning of the original נכתה nechothoh, which we here translate precious things, and in the margin spicery or jewels. I suppose the last to be meant.

**There was nothing in his house** He showed them through a spirit of folly and exultation, all his treasures, and no doubt those in the house of the Lord. And it is said, 2 Chronicles 32:31, that in this business God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart; and this trial proved that in his heart there was little else than pride and folly.

**Verse 17. Behold, the days come** This was fulfilled in the days of the latter Jewish kings, when the Babylonians had led the people away into captivity, and stripped the land, the temple, etc., of all their riches. See Daniel 1:1-3.

**Verse 18. They shall be eunuchs** Perhaps this means no more than that they should become household servants to the kings of Babylon. See the fulfillment, 2 Kings 24:13-15, and Daniel 1:1-3.

**Verse 19. Good is the word of the Lord** He has spoken right, I have done foolishly. I submit to his judgments.



*Is it not good if peace and truth be in my days?* I believe Hezekiah inquires whether there shall be peace and truth in his days. And the question seems to be rather of an interested nature. He does not appear to deplore the calamities that were coming on the land, provided peace and truth might prevail in his days.

**Verse 20. *The rest of the acts of Hezekiah*** See the parallel places in Isaiah and in 2 Chronicles. In this latter book, 2 Chronicles 32:24-33, we find several particulars that are not inserted here; especially concerning his pride, the increase of his riches, his storehouses of corn, wine, and oil; his stalls for all manner of beasts; his cities, flocks, and herds, in abundance; and the bringing the upper water course of Gihon to the west side of the city of David, by which he brought a plentiful supply of water into that city, etc., etc., etc.

ON the subject of the Babylonian embassy I may say a few words. However we may endeavor to excuse Hezekiah, it is certain that he made an exhibition of his riches and power in a spirit of great vanity; and that this did displease the Lord. It was also ruinous to Judea: when those foreigners had seen such a profusion of wealth, such princely establishments, and such a fruitful land, it was natural for them to conceive the wish that they had such treasures, and from that to covet the very treasures they saw. They made their report to their king and countrymen, and the desire to possess the Jewish wealth became general; and in consequence of this there is little doubt that the conquest of Jerusalem was projected. History is not barren in such instances: the same kind of cause has produced similar effects. Take two or three notable instances.

When the barbarous Goth and Vandal nations saw the pleasant and fruitful plains and hills of Italy, and the vast treasures of the Roman people, the abundance of the necessaries, conveniences, comforts, and luxuries of life, which met their eyes in every direction; they were never at rest till their swords put them in possession of the whole, and brought the mistress of the world to irretrievable ruin.

Vortigern, a British king, unhappily invited the Saxons, in 445, to assist him against his rebellious subjects: they came, saw the land that it was good, and in the end took possession of it, having driven out, or into the mountains of Wales, all the original Britons.

The Danes, in the ninth century, made some inroads into England, found the land better than their own, and never rested till they established themselves in this country, and, after having ruled it for a considerable time, were at last, with the utmost difficulty, driven out.

These nations had only to see a better land in order to covet it, and their exertions were not wanting in order to possess it.

How far other nations, since those times, have imitated the most foolish and impolitic conduct of the Jewish king, and how far their conduct may have been or may yet be marked with the same consequences, the pages of impartial history have shown and will show: God's ways are all equal, and the judge of all the earth will do right. But we need not wonder, after this, that the Jews fell into the hands of the Babylonians, for this was the political consequence of their own conduct: nor could it be otherwise, the circumstances of both nations considered, unless God, by a miraculous interposition, had saved them; and this it was inconsistent with his justice to do, because they had, in their pride and vanity, offended against him. To be lifted up with pride and vain glory in the possession of any blessings, is the most direct way to lose them; as it induces God, who dispensed them for our benefit, to resume them, because that which was designed for our good, through our own perversity becomes our bane.

1. I have intimated, in the note on 2 Kings 20:11, that the shadow was brought back on the dial of Ahaz by means of refraction. On this subject some farther observations may not be improper.

2. Any person may easily convince himself of the effect of refraction by this simple experiment: Place a vessel on the floor, and put a piece of coin on the bottom, close to that part of the vessel which is farthest off from yourself; then move back till you find that the edge of the vessel next to yourself fairly covers the coin, and that it is now entirely out of sight. Stand exactly in that position, and let a person pour water gently into the vessel, and you will soon find the coin to reappear, and to be entirely in sight when the vessel is full, though neither it nor you have changed your positions in the least.

By the refracting power of the atmosphere we have several minutes more of the solar light each day than we should otherwise have. "The

atmosphere refracts the sun's rays so as to bring him in sight every clear day, before he rises in the horizon, and to keep him in view for some minutes after he is really set below it. For at some times of the year we see the sun ten minutes longer above the horizon than he would be if there were no refractions, and above six minutes every day at a mean rate.”  
-Ferguson.

And it is entirely owing to refraction that we have any morning or evening twilight; without this power in the atmosphere, the heavens would be as black as ebony in the absence of the sun; and at his rising we should pass in a moment from the deepest darkness into the brightest light; and at his setting, from the most intense light to the most profound darkness, which in a few days would be sufficient to destroy the visual organs of all the animals in air, earth, or sea.

That the rays of light can be supernaturally refracted, and the sun appear to be where he actually is not, we have a most remarkable instance in Kepler. Some Hollanders, who wintered in Nova Zembla in the year 1596, were surprised to find that after a continual night of three months, the sun began to rise seventeen days sooner than (according to computation deduced from the altitude of the pole, observed to be seventy-six degrees) he should have done; which can only be accounted for by a miracle, or by an extraordinary refraction of the sun's rays passing through the cold dense air in that climate. At that time the sun, as Kepler computes, was almost five degrees below the horizon when he appeared; and consequently the refraction of his rays was about nine times stronger than it is with us.

3. Now this might be all purely natural, though it was extraordinary, and it proves the possibility of what I have conjectured, even on natural principles; but the foretelling of this, and leaving the going back or forward to the choice of the king, and the thing occurring in the place and time when and where it was predicted, shows that it was supernatural and miraculous, though the means were purely natural. Yet in that climate, (LAT. thirty-one degrees fifty minutes north, and LONG. thirty-five degrees twenty-five minutes east,) where vapors to produce an extraordinary refraction of the solar rays could not be expected, the collecting or producing them heightens and ascertains the miracle. “But why contend

that the thing was done by refraction? Could not God as easily have caused the sun, or rather the earth, to turn back, as to have produced this extraordinary and miraculous refraction?" I answer, Yes. But it is much more consistent with the wisdom and perfections of God to perform a work or accomplish an end by simple means, than by those that are complex; and had it been done in the other way, it would have required a miracle to invert and a miracle to restore; and a strong convulsion on the earth's surface to bring it ten degrees suddenly back, and to take it the same suddenly forward. The miracle, according to my supposition, was performed on the atmosphere, and without in the least disturbing even that; whereas, on the other supposition, it could not have been done without suspending or interrupting the laws of the solar system, and this without gaining a hair's breadth in credulity or conviction more by such stupendous interpositions than might be effected by the agency of clouds and vapors. The point to be gained was the bringing back the shadow on the dial ten degrees: this might have been gained by the means I have here described, as well as by the other; and these means being much more simple, were more worthy the Divine choice than those which are more complex, and could not have been used without producing the necessity of working at least double or treble miracles.

4. Before I proceed to the immediate object of inquiry, I shall beg leave to make some observations on the invention and construction of DIALS in general.

SUNDIALS must have been of great antiquity, though the earliest we hear of is that of Ahaz; but this certainly was not the first of its kind, though it is the first on record. Ahaz began his reign about four hundred years before Alexander, and about twelve years after the foundation of Rome.

Anaximenes, the Milesian, who flourished about four hundred years before Christ, is said by Pliny to have been the first who made a sundial, the use of which he taught to the Spartans, but others give this honor to Thales, his countryman, who flourished two hundred years before him.

Aristarchus of Samos, who lived before Archimedes, invented a plain horizontal disc, with a gnomon, to distinguish the hours, and had its rim raised all around, to prevent the shadow from extending too far.

Probably all these were rude and evanescent attempts, for it does not appear that the Romans, who borrowed all their knowledge from the Greeks, knew any thing of a sundial before that set up by Papirius Cursor, about four hundred and sixty years after the foundation of Rome; before which time, says Pliny, there was no mention of any account of time but by the rising and setting of the sun. This dial was erected near the temple of Quirinus, but is allowed to have been very inaccurate. About thirty years after, the consul Marcus Valerius Messala brought a dial out of Sicily, which he placed on a pillar near the rostrum; but as it was not made for the latitude of Rome, it did not show the time exactly; however it was the only one they had for a hundred years, when Martius Philippus set up one more exact.

Since those times the science of dialing has been cultivated in most civilized nations, but we have no professed treatise on the subject before the time of the jesuit Clavius, who, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, demonstrated both the theory and practice of dialling; but he did this after the most rigid mathematical principles, so as to render that which was simple in itself exceedingly obscure. Though we have useful and correct works of this kind from Rivard, Deuteronomy Parcieux, Dom. Bedos de Celles, Joseph Blaise Garnier, Gravesande, Emerson, Martin, and Leadbetter; yet something more specific, more simple, and more general, is a desideratum in the science of sciaterics or dialling.

### **OBSERVATIONS ON THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF THE SUNDIAL OF AHAZ, WITH A DIAGRAM ON ITS SUPPOSED FORM**

5. When writing on the appointment of Jehu to be king of Israel, 2 Kings 9:13, I was struck with the manner in which the subject of the thirteenth verse was understood by the Chaldee: "Then they hastened and took every man his garment, and put it under him, on the TOP of the STAIRS;" according to the Hebrew, **אל גרם המעלות**, *el gerem hammaaloth*, which might be translated, on the bare (naked or uncovered) steps. This the Targumist has translated by **לדרג שעיא** *lidrag sheaiya*, "at the HOUR-STEPS." The other versions, knowing nothing of what was intended, have endeavored to guess severally at a meaning. On turning to 2 Kings 20:11, where the same word **מעלות** *maaloth* is used, and most evidently there implies some kind of

sundial, I found the Chaldee still more pointed, both in this and in the parallel place, Isaiah 38:8, rendering the Hebrew words **בצורת אב שעיא** *betsurath eben sheaiya*, “by the shadow of the stone of hours,” from which I was led to conclude that some kind of gnomonic figure, or sundial, was intended; and that the hours or divisions of time were shown by a shadow, projected on stone steps, gradually ascending to a certain height. This thought I communicated to the Rev. Philip Garrett, one of the preachers among the people called Methodists, of whose rare knowledge in the science of gnomonics, and ingenuity in constructing every possible variety of dials, I had already indubitable proofs, and requested him, from the principle I had laid down, to try whether such an instrument could be constructed that might serve at once as a public tribunal, and as a dial, to ascertain all the inequalities of the Jewish division of time?

A more difficult problem in the science he was never called to solve. Though several had attempted to construct dials to show the mode by which different nations measured time, and among the rest the Jews; yet nothing properly satisfactory has been produced, although one nearly in the same form of outline with the present may be found in Hutton’s *Mathematical Recreations*, vol. iii., p. 337, projected on a plane superficies, which could not possibly show the ascending and descending of the shadow like that now before the reader, which the ingenuity of the above gentleman has brought to almost as great a degree of perfection as can reasonably be expected. And that the dial of Ahaz was constructed on a similar principle, there can be but little doubt, as the words of the original seem to express this and no other form; and so the Chaldee appears to have understood it; nor is it easy to conceive that one on any other principle could ascertain in all seasons the varying admeasurement of the Jewish time.

6. Having said thus much relative to the circumstances which gave birth to this dial, it may be deemed necessary to give a general view of the natural and artificial divisions of time, and then a description of the dial itself.

The most obvious division of time is into day and night; these are marked out by the rising and setting of the sun. Modern writers call the time from sunrise to sunset the natural day; the night is the time from sunset to sunrise; these days and nights are subject to great inequalities in every part of the earth, except under the equator. The most ancient division of the equatorial day was into the morning and evening; the night was divided into watches.

Hours are either equal or unequal; an unequal hour is the twelfth part of a natural day, or the twelfth part of the night. In summer, when the days are the longest, the diurnal hours are the longest, and the nocturnal hours shortest; in winter, on the contrary, when the days are shortest, the hours of the day are the shortest, and the hours of the night longest. The difference between the hours of the day and those of the night is greatest at the

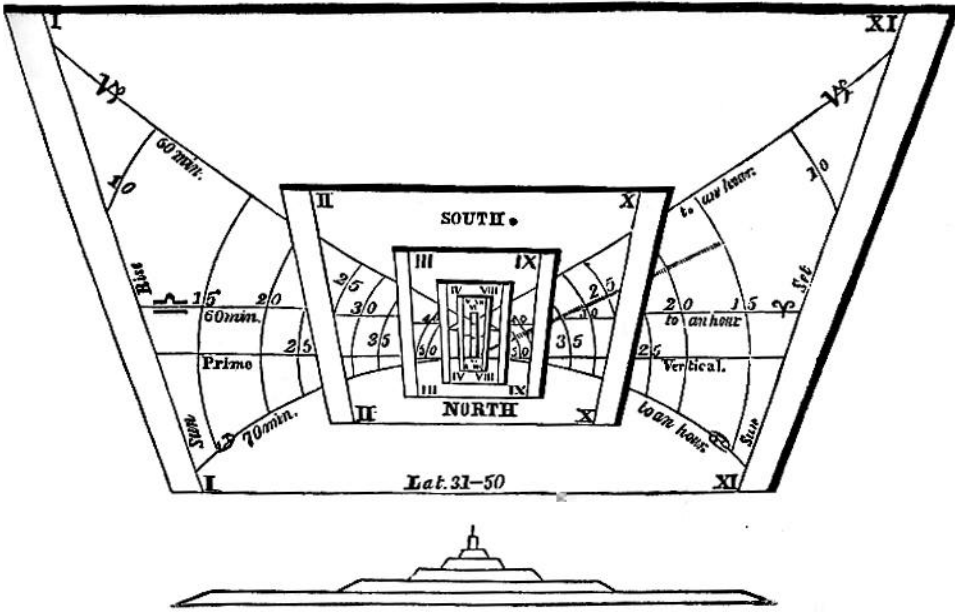
solstices, because then there is the greatest inequality between the length of the day and that of the night. At the equinoxes, when the days and nights are of an equal length, all hours, both of days and nights, are equal.

The ancient Jews made use of unequal hours; with them sunrise was the beginning of the first hour of the day, noon was the end of the sixth hour, and the twelfth hour ended at sunset.

Doctor Long observes, "These times might be measured by an astronomer; but how unequal hours can be marked for common use, is not easy to say." He farther observes that "the ancients had sundials; but I think unequal hours could not be marked thereon exactly." And in a note on this observation he remarks "The sundials of the ancients, to show unequal hours, were not made in the method used at present, with a gnomon parallel to the axis of the earth, but had a pin set upright upon a plane, rounded at the upper end, the shadow whereof marked their unequal hours in the following manner: by means of an analemma, or projection of the sphere, six curves were drawn upon the plane, to show where the shadow of the pin at the several hours terminated every month in the year; one curve served for two months, because the shadows are of the same length in January as in December, in February as in November, in March as in October, etc.; each curve was drawn long enough to take in all the hours of the longest day in the respective months, and was divided into twelve equal parts. It is easy to see that a dial made by this method, in order to show the unequal hours exactly, ought to have half as many curves, or parallel lines, as there are days in the year, but this would require so many lines as would make it all confusion; it is possible they had only one line for a month, and that for the middle of the month."

The doctor is perfectly correct in observing, that "the sundials of the ancients, to show unequal hours, were not made in the method used at present, with a gnomon parallel to the axis of the earth;" because such a dial could not be of any use to those nations whose divisions of the solar hours were unequal, or more or less than sixty minutes to an hour. But the doctor is mistaken in supposing the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of constructing a sundial to show these unequal hours; for eleven lines are all that is necessary to show the hours for every day in the year; and forty-four lines would show all the quarters: whereas, on his plan, it would require near eleven hundred calculations of the altitude of the sun, and the same number to show where the shadow of the gnomon at the several hours terminated. His dial would therefore require above one hundred and eighty parallel lines, and nearly eleven hundred marks for the hours only; but if the quarters are inserted, four thousand four hundred marks would be necessary. This would require the labor of six or eight months, whereas the plan here adopted would not require in its calculations and construction as many hours.

## SUPPOSED FORM OF THE SUNDIAL OF AHAZ



7. A description of the dial. This dial consists of eleven steps placed parallel to the horizon, with a perpendicular gnomon fixed in the upper or middle step, which step is placed exactly north and south, and forms the meridian or sixth-hour line.

All the operations of this dial are determined by the point of the shadow projected from the gnomon on the steps of the dial.

Every day for six months the shadow from the point of the gnomon makes a different angle with the gnomon, which makes the hours of one day to differ in length from the hours of the preceding and following days. The same observations apply to the other six months in the year.

The shadow crosses each step of the dial every day in the year.

Each day in the year consists of twelve hours from the time of sunrise to sunset, which makes a difference of twenty minutes between an hour in the longest day and an hour in the shortest. The longest day, consisting of twelve hours of seventy minutes to an hour; and the shortest of twelve hours of fifty minutes to an hour; but when the sun enters Aries or Libra each hour consists of sixty minutes.

To be able to understand this dial, one example will be sufficient: On the 21st of March, or the 23d of September, the shadow from the print of the gnomon



will enter or ascend the first step of the dial, at the first hour of the day, at the west side of the dial on the equinoctial line; eleven minutes afterwards the shadow comes in contact with the circle marked fifteen degrees, which is the altitude of the sun at that time; twenty-four minutes afterwards the shadow touches the circle of twenty degrees; and in twenty-five minutes it ascends the second step, at the second hour of the day, when the altitude of the sun is twenty-five degrees eight minutes.

In twenty-four minutes the shadow comes to the circle of thirty degrees; and twenty-five minutes after it arrives at the circle of thirty-five degrees; and in eleven minutes it ascends the third step at the third hour of the day, when the altitude is thirty-six degrees fifty-seven minutes. In sixteen minutes the point of the shadow intersects the circle of forty degrees; and in forty-four minutes it ascends the fourth step at the fourth hour of the day, when the altitude of the sun is forty-seven degrees twenty-two minutes; and in eighteen minutes of time it comes in contact with the circle of fifty degrees, etc., etc., until it arrives at the meridian step or line at the sixth hour of the day, when the altitude is fifty-eight degrees ten minutes; than the shadow descends the sixth step, and moves on to the seventh, etc., descending step after step, tracing the equinoctial line on the east side of the dial, intersecting the steps or hour lines, and the circles of altitude, until it leaves the dial at the eleventh hour of the day.

A dial of this construction is the most simple, useful, and durable that can be made; and as exclusively and completely adapted to ascertain the ancient Jewish divisions of the solar hours.

The steps of this dial render the construction a little more difficult than it otherwise would be if the lines were drawn on a plane superficies, which would give exactly the same divisions of the hours.

N. B. A vertical south dial, in lat. thirty-one degrees fifty minutes, (the latitude of Jerusalem,) could be of little or no use to ascertain these divisions for several months in the year. The same remark may be made respecting a south vertical concave dial. The sun cannot shine upon a south vertical plane, in lat. thirty-one degrees fifty minutes in the longest day before fifty-three minutes past eight, or nearly nine, in the morning.

With respect to the dimensions of this dial, if we suppose the height of the stile from the bottom of the lowest step to be four feet, this would allow six inches for the thickness of each step, and twelve inches for the height of the stile above the upper step. According to this scale the south end of the dial would be ten yards; the north end sixteen yards; and the east and west sides eight yards two feet. The ground-work might be eighteen yards by twelve, making an oblong square facing the four cardinal points of the heavens.

N. B. All the lines upon a dial-plane are inverted, with respect to the cardinal points of the heavens.

The lines which show the hours from sunrise to the meridian, are on the west side of the dial-plane; and the lines which show the hours from the meridian to sunset are on the east side of the dial-plane; the southern tropic, Capricorn, is on the north end of the dial-plane; and the northern tropic, Cancer, is on the south end of the plane.

The narrow end of the dial looks towards the south, and is marked north; the wide end looks north, and is marked south. The side which looks west is marked sunrise, and the side which looks east is marked sunset.

8. In the annexed diagram a transverse section of the dial is represented where the steps are seen at one view ascending and descending to and from the gnomon or stile on the upper or sixth step. These steps are all equal in their height, but unequal on their upper surface, as the diagram shows, and for the reasons alleged above. Each of these steps might have been divided into parts or degrees, to mark the smaller divisions of time; and to this sort of division there appears to be a reference in the text, where it is said, the shadow went back ten degrees. It seems the miracle was wrought in the afternoon, for it is said, The shadow was brought ten degrees BACKWARD, by which it had GONE DOWN; so it appears that the shadow had reascended ten degrees on the afternoon steps; and when this was done, so that all were fully convinced of the miracle, the shadow again descended to its true place on the steps; and this would be the immediate consequence of dissipating the vapors which I have supposed to be the agent which God employed to produce, by refraction, this most extraordinary phenomenon.

A dial constructed in this way, in the center of a town, or some public place, would serve, not only to give the divisions of time, but also as a place from which proclamations might be made; and especially from the upper step, where the speaker might stand by the gnomon, and be sufficiently elevated above the crowd below.

On such-a place I have supposed Jehu to have been proclaimed king; and to do him honor his captains spread their garments on the steps; the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth, by which he ascended, to the sixth step, on which the gnomon was placed, and where he was proclaimed and acknowledged the king of Israel; for it is said, The captains hasted, and took every man his GARMENT, and put it under him on the TOP of the STAIRS, and blew with trumpets, saying, JEHU is KING! 2 Kings 9:13; where see the note.

Pietro Nonius or Nunnex, a celebrated Portuguese mathematician about the middle of the sixteenth century, proved that the shadow on a stile in a sundial

might go backward without a miracle; which was founded on the following theorem:—

“In all countries, the zenith of which is situated between the equator and the tropic, as long as the sun passes beyond the zenith, towards the apparent or elevated pole, he arrives twice before noon at the same azimuth and the same thing takes place in the afternoon.”

This gave rise to the demonstration that a dial might be constructed for any latitude on which the shadow shall retrograde or go backward. And it is effected in the following manner:—

Incline a plane turned directly south in such a manner that its zenith may fall between the tropic and equator; and nearly about the middle of the distance between these two circles. In the latitude of London, for example, which is fifty-one degrees thirty-one minutes, the plane must make an angle of about thirty-eight degrees. In the middle of the plane fix an upright stile of such a length that its shadow shall go beyond the plane; and if several angular lines be then drawn from the bottom of the stile towards the south, about the time of the solstice, the shadow will retrograde twice in the course of the day, as mentioned above. This is evident, since the plane is parallel to the horizontal plane, having its zenith under the same meridian, at the distance of twelve degrees from the equator towards the north; the shadows of the two stiles must consequently move in the same manner in both.

Of these principles some have endeavored to make an unholy use, contending that what the Holy Scriptures consider to be a miracle, in the case of the retrogradation of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, was the effect of a mere natural cause, without any thing miraculous in it. On this subject Dr. Hutton very properly remarks: “It is very improbable, if the retrogradation which took place on the dial of that prince had been a natural effect, that it should not have been observed till the prophet announced it to him as the sign of his cure; for in that case it must have always occurred when the sun was between the tropic and the zenith.” Hutton’s *Mathematical Recreations*, vol. iii. p. 323.

To this we may add, that if the dial of Ahaz had been thus constructed, the effect must have been generally known; and Hezekiah would never have taken that for a miracle which he and all his courtiers must have observed as an occurrence which at particular seasons, took place twice every day. And that the matter was known publicly to have been a miracle we learn from this circumstance: that Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, sent his ambassadors to Jerusalem to inquire after the wonder that was done in the land, as well as after Hezekiah’s health: see 2 Chronicles 32:31. But the miraculous

the miraculous interference of God is so strikingly evident. Besides, such a dial could not be constructed for the latitude of Jerusalem without having the north end elevated twenty degrees seven minutes; which could not be used for the purpose which is indicated in the text. See No. 3 of the preceding observations.

## CHAPTER 21

*Manasseh succeeds his father Hezekiah, reigns fifty-five years, and fills Jerusalem and the whole land with abominable idolatry and murder, 1-9. God denounces the heaviest judgments against him and the land, 10-15. Manasseh's acts and death, 16-18. Amon his son succeeds him, and reigns two years; is equally profligate with his father; is slain by his servants, and buried in the garden of Uzza; and Josiah his son reigns in his stead, 19-26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 1. *Manasseh was twelve years old*** He was born about three years after his father's miraculous cure; he was carried captive to Babylon, repented, was restored to his kingdom, put down idolatry, and died at the age of sixty-seven years See 2 Chronicles 33:1-20.

**Verse 2. *After the abominations of the heathen*** He exactly copied the conduct of those nations which God had cast out of that land.

**Verse 3. *Made a grove*** He made Asherah, the Babylonian Melitta or Roman Venus. See 2 Kings 17:10, and the observations at the end of that chapter; and see here on 2 Kings 21:7.

***Worshipped all the host of heaven*** All the stars and planets, but particularly the sun and the moon.

**Verse 4. *Built altars*** He placed idolatrous altars even in the temple.

**Verse 6. *Made his son pass through the fire*** Consecrated him to Moloch.

***Observed times*** **וַעֲוֹנָה** veonen; he practiced divination by the clouds; by observing their course at particular times, their different kinds, contrary directions, etc., etc.

***Used enchantments*** **וַנְחִשׁ** venichesh; he used incantations, spells, and charms.

**Dealt with familiar spirits** **וַעֲשֵׂה אוֹב** veasah ob; he was a necromancer; was a raiser of spirits, whom he endeavored to press into his service; he had a Python.

**And wizards** **וַיִּדְעֹנִים** veyiddeonim; the knowing ones, the white witches, and such like; see on Leviticus 19:26-31, where most of these terms are particularly explained and illustrated.

**Verse 7. He set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house** Every one may see that Asherah here must signify an idol, and not a grove; and for the proof of this see the observations at the end of the chapter. {2 Kings 21:26}

**Verse 8. Neither will I make the feet of Israel** Had they been faithful to God's testimonies they never had gone into captivity, and should even at this day have been in possession of the promised land.

**Verse 9. Seduced them to do more evil** He did all he could to pervert the national character, and totally destroy the worship of the true God; and he succeeded.

**Verse 10. The Lord spake by-the prophets** The prophets were Hosea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Isaiah. These five following verses contain the sum of what these prophets spoke. It is said that Isaiah not only prophesied in those days, but also that he was put to death by Manasseh, being sawn asunder by a wooden saw.

**Verse 12. Both his ears shall tingle.** **תִּצְלַנָּה** titstsalnah; something expressive of the sound in what we call, from the same sensation, the tingling of the ears. This is the consequence of having the ears suddenly pierced with a loud and shrill noise; the ears seem to ring for some time after. The prophets spoke to them vehemently, so that the sound seemed to be continued even when they had left off speaking. This was a faithful and solemn testimony.

**Verse 13. The line of Samaria** I will treat Jerusalem as I have treated Samaria. Samaria was taken, pillaged, ruined, and its inhabitants led into captivity; Jerusalem shall have the same measure.

***And the plummet of the house of Ahab*** The house of Ahab was totally destroyed, and not a man of his race left to sit upon the throne of Israel: so shall it be done to the house or royal family of Judah; they shall be all finally destroyed, and not a man of their race shall any more sit on the throne of Judah; nor shall Judah have a throne to sit on. Thus Jerusalem shall have the same weight as well as the same measure as Samaria, because it has copied all the abominations which brought that kingdom to total destruction.

***I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish*** The Vulgate translates this clause as follows: *Delebo Jerusalem, sicut deleri solent tabulae*; “I will blot out Jerusalem as tablets are wont to be blotted out.” This is a metaphor taken from the ancient method of writing: they traced their letters with a stile on boards thinly spread over with wax; for this purpose one end of the stile was sharp, the other end blunt and smooth, with which they could rub out what they had written, and so smooth the place and spread back the wax, as to render it capable of receiving any other word. Thus the Lord had written down Jerusalem, never intending that its name or its memorial should be blotted out. It was written down The Holy City, The City of the Great King; but now God turns the stile and blots this out; and the Holy Jerusalem, the City of the Great King, is no longer to be found! This double use of the stile is pointed out in this ancient enigma:—

*Deuteronomy summo planus; sed non ego planus in imo:  
Versor utrinque manu, diverso et munere fungor:  
Altera pars revocat, quicquid pars altera fecit.*

*“I am flat at the top, but sharp at the bottom;  
I turn either end, and perform a double function:  
One end destroys what the other end has made.”*

But the idea of emptying out and wiping a dish expresses the same meaning equally well. Jerusalem shall be emptied of all its wealth, and of all its inhabitants, as truly as a dish turned up is emptied of all its contents; and it shall be turned upside down, never to be filled again. This is true from that time to the present hour. Jerusalem is the dish turned upside down, the tablet blotted out to the present day! How great are God’s mercies! and how terrible his judgments!

**Verse 14. *I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance*** One part (the ten tribes) was already forsaken, and carried into captivity; the remnant (the tribe of Judah) was now about to be forsaken.

**Verse 16. *Shed innocent blood very much*** Like the deities he worshipped, he was fierce and cruel; an unprincipled, merciless tyrant: he slew innocent people and God's prophets.

**Verse 17. *Now the rest of the acts*** In 2 Chronicles 33:11, etc., we read that the Assyrians took Manasseh, bound him with fetters, and took him to Babylon; that there he repented, sought God, and was, we are not told



enough of this man when we hear that he was as bad as his father was in the beginning of his reign, but did not copy his father's repentance.

**Verse 26. *The garden of Uzza*** The family sepulcher or burying-place.

It is said 2 Kings 21:3, 7, that "Manasseh made a grove; and he set a graven image of the grove," etc. **וישם את פסל האשרה אשר עשה** vaiyasem eth pesel haasherah, asher asah: "And he put the graven image of Asherah, which he had made," into the house.

Asherah, which we translate grove, is undoubtedly the name of an idol; and probably of one which was carved out of wood.

R. S. Jarchi, on Genesis 12:3, says, "that **אשרה** asherah means a tree which was worshipped by the Gentiles;" like as the oak was worshipped by the ancient Druids in Britain.

Castel, in Lex. Hept. sub voce **אשר**, defines **אשרה** asherah thus, Simulacrum ligneum Astartae dicatum; "A wooden image dedicated to Astrate or Venus."

The Septuagint render the words by **αλσος**; and Flamminius Nobilis, on 2 Kings 23:4, says Rursus notat Theodoretus **το αλσος** esse Astartem et Venerem, et ab aliis interpretibus dictum Ashatroth; i.e. "Again Theodoret observes, **αλσος** is Astarte and Venus; and by other interpreters called Ashtaroth."

The Targum of Ben Uzziel, on Deuteronomy 7:5, **ואשיריהם תגדעו** vaasheyrethem tegaddeun; i.e., "Their groves shall ye cut down" - translates the place thus, **ואילני סיגדיהו תקצצו** veilaney sigedeyhon tekatsetsun; "And the oaks of their adoration shall ye cut down."

From the above it is pretty evident that idols, not groves, are generally intended where **אשרה** asherah and its derivatives are used.

Here follow proofs:—

In 2 Kings 23:6, it is said that "Josiah brought out the grove from the house of the Lord." This translation seems very absurd; for what grove could there be in the temple? There was none planted there, nor was there room for any. The plain meaning of **השרה מבית יהוה ויצא את**

vaiyotse eth haasherah mibbeyth Jehovah, is, “And he brought out the (goddess) Asherah from the house of the Lord, and burnt it,” etc.

That this is the true meaning of the place appears farther from 2 Kings 23:7, where it is said, “He broke down the houses of the sodomites,” (הקדשים *hakkedeshim*, of the whoremongers,) “where the women wove hangings for the grove” (בתים לאשרה *bottim laasherah*, “houses or shrines for Asherah.”) Similar perhaps to those which the silversmiths made for Diana, Acts 19:24. It is rather absurd to suppose that the women were employed in making curtains to encompass a grove.

The Syriac and Arabic versions countenance the interpretation I have given above. In 2 Kings 23:6, the former says, “He cast out the idol, [S] *dechlotho*, from the house of the Lord;” and in 2 Kings 23:7: “He threw down the houses, [S] *dazoine*, of the prostitutes; and the women who wove garments, [S] *ledechlotho*, for the idols which were there.” The Arabic is exactly the same.

From the whole it is evident that Asherah was no other than Venus; the nature of whose worship is plain enough from the mention of whoremongers and prostitutes.

I deny not that there were groves consecrated to idolatrous worship among the Gentiles, but I am sure that such are not intended in the above-cited passages; and the text, in most places, reads better when understood in this way.

## CHAPTER 22

*Josiah succeeds Amon his father, and reigns thirty-one years, 1, 2. He repairs the breaches of the temple, 3-7. Hilkiah finds the book of the law in the temple, 8. It is read by Shaphan the scribe, before the king and his servants, 9, 10. The king, greatly affected, sends to inquire of Huldah the prophetess, 11-13. She delivers an afflictive prophecy concerning the evils that were coming upon the land, 14-17. But promises Josiah that these evils shall not come in his time, 18-20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22

**Verse 1. *Josiah was eight years old*** He was one of the best, if not the best, of all the Jewish kings since the time of David. He began well, continued well, and ended well.

**Verse 4. *That he may sum the silver*** As Josiah began to seek the Lord as soon as he began to reign, we may naturally conclude that the worship of God that was neglected and suppressed by his father, was immediately restored; and the people began their accustomed offerings to the temple. Ten years therefore had elapsed since these offerings began; no one had, as yet, taken account of them; nor were they applied to the use for which they were given, viz., the repairing the breaches of the temple.

**Verse 8. *I have found the book of the law*** Was this the autograph of Moses? It is very probable that it was, for in the parallel place; 2 Chronicles 34:14, it is said to be the book of the law of the Lord by Moses. It is supposed to be that part of Deuteronomy (28., 29., 30., and 31.,) which contains the renewing of the covenant in the plains of Moab, and which contains the most terrible invectives against the corrupters of God's word and worship.

The rabbins say that Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon endeavored to destroy all the copies of the law, and this only was saved by having been buried under a paving-stone. It is scarcely reasonable to suppose that this was the only copy of the law that was found in Judea; for even if we grant that

Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon had endeavored to destroy all the books of the law, yet they could not have succeeded so as to destroy the whole. Besides, Manasseh endeavored after his conversion to restore every part of the Divine worship, and in this he could have done nothing without the Pentateuch; and the succeeding reign of Amon was too short to give him opportunity to undo every thing that his penitent father had reformed. Add to all these considerations, that in the time of Jehoshaphat teaching from the law was universal in the land, for he set on foot an itinerant ministry, in order to instruct the people fully: for “he sent to his princes to teach in the cities of Judah; and with them he sent Levites and priests; and they went about through all the cities of Judah, and taught the people, having the book of the Lord with them;” see 2 Chronicles 17:7-9. And if there be any thing wanting to show the improbability of the thing, it must be this, that the transactions mentioned here took place in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, who had, from the time he came to the throne, employed himself in the restoration of the pure worship of God; and it is not likely that during these eighteen years he was without a copy of the Pentateuch. The simple fact seems to be this, that this was the original of the covenant renewed by Moses with the people in the plains of Moab, and which he ordered to be laid up beside the ark; (Deuteronomy 31:26;) and now being unexpectedly found, its antiquity, the occasion of its being made, the present circumstances of the people, the imperfect state in which the reformation was as yet, after all that had been done, would all concur to produce the effect here mentioned on the mind of the pious Josiah.

**Verse 14. *Went unto Huldah the prophetess*** This is a most singular circumstance: At this time Jeremiah was certainly a prophet in Israel, but it is likely he now dwelt at Anathoth. and could not be readily consulted; Zephaniah also prophesied under this reign, but probably he had not yet begun; Hilkiyah was high priest, and the priest’s lips should retain knowledge. Shaphan was scribe, and must have been conversant in sacred affairs to have been at all fit for his office; and yet Huldah, a prophetess, of whom we know nothing but by this circumstance, is consulted on the meaning of the book of the law; for the secret of the Lord was neither with Hilkiyah the high priest, Shaphan the scribe, nor any other of the servants of the king, or ministers of the temple! We find from this, and we have

many facts in all ages to corroborate it, that a pontiff, a pope, a bishop, or a priest, may, in some cases, not possess the true knowledge of God; and that a simple woman, possessing the life of God in her soul, may have more knowledge of the Divine testimonies than many of those whose office it is to explain and enforce them.

On this subject Dr. Priestley in his note makes the following very judicious remark:—"It pleased God to distinguish several women with the spirit of prophecy, as well as other great attainments, to show that in his sight, and especially in things of a spiritual nature, there is no essential pre-eminence in the male sex, though in some things the female be subject to the male."

**Verse 17. *My wrath shall be kindled*** The decree is gone forth; Jerusalem shall be delivered into the hands of its enemies; the people will revolt more and more; towards them longsuffering is useless; the wrath of God is kindled, and shall not be quenched. This was a dreadful message.

**Verse 19. *Because thine heart was tender*** Because thou hast feared the Lord, and trembled at his word and hast wept before me, I have heard thee, so far that these evils shall not come upon the land in thy lifetime.

**Verse 20. *Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace*** During thy life none of these calamities shall fall upon the people, and no adversary shall be permitted to disturb the peace of Judea, and thou shalt die in peace with God. But was Josiah gathered to the grave in peace? Is it not said, 2 Kings 23:29, that Pharaoh-nechoh slew him at Megiddo? On this we may remark, that the Assyrians and the Jews were at peace; that Josiah might feel it his duty to oppose the Egyptian king going against his friend and ally, and endeavor to prevent him from passing through his territories; and that in his endeavors to oppose him he was mortally wounded at Megiddo: but certainly was not killed there; for his servants put him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died in peace. See 2 Chronicles 35:24. So that, however we take the place here, we shall find that the words of Huldah were true: he did die in peace, and was gathered to his fathers in peace.

FROM the account in the above chapter, where we have this business detailed, we find that Josiah should not have meddled in the quarrel

between the Egyptian and the Assyrian kings, for God had given a commission to the former against the latter; but he did it in error, and suffered for it. But this unfortunate end of this pious man does not at all impeach the credit of Huldah; he died in peace in his own kingdom. He died in peace with God, and there was neither war nor desolation in his land: nor did the king of Egypt proceed any farther against the Jews during his life; for he said, "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee, but the house wherewith I have war; for God commanded me to make haste: forbear then from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him, and hearkened not to the words of Nechoh, from the mouth of God. And the archers shot at King Josiah: and the king said, Bear me away, for I am sore wounded. And his servants took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot, and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died and was buried in the sepulcher of his fathers;" 2 Chronicles 35:21-24.

It seems as if the Egyptian king had brought his troops by sea to Caesarea, and wished to cross the Jordan about the southern point of the sea of Tiberias, that he might get as speedily as possible into the Assyrian dependencies; and that he took this road, for God, as he said, had commanded him to make haste.

## CHAPTER 23

*Josiah reads in the temple to the elders of Judah, the priests, the prophets, and the people, the book of the covenant which had been found, 1, 2. He makes a covenant, and the people stand to it, 3. He destroys the vessels of Baal and Asherah, and puts down the idolatrous priests; breaks down the houses of the sodomites, and the high places; defiles Topheth; takes away the horses of the sun; destroys the altars of Ahaz; breaks in pieces the images; and breaks down and burns Jeroboam's altar at Beth-el, 4-15. Fulfills the word of the prophet, who cried against the altar at Beth-el, 16-18. Destroys the high places in Samaria, slays the idolatrous priests, and celebrates a great passover, 19-23; and puts away all the dealers with familiar spirits, etc., 24. His eminent character; he is mortally wounded at Megiddo, and buried at Jerusalem, 25-30. Jehoahaz reigns in his stead, and does evil in the sight of the Lord, 31, 32. Is dethroned by Pharaoh-nechoh; and Eliakim, his brother, called also Jehoiakim, made king in his stead; the land is laid under tribute by the king of Egypt, and Jehoiakim reigns wickedly, 33-37.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 23

**Verse 2. *The king went up into the house of the Lord*** Here is another very singular circumstance. The high priest, scribes, priest, and prophets, are gathered together, with all the elders of the people, and the king himself reads the book of the covenant which had been lately found! It is strange that either the high priest, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, or some other of the prophets, who were certainly there present, did not read the sacred book! It is likely that the king considered himself a mediator between God and them, and therefore read and made the covenant.

**Verse 3. *Stood by a pillar*** He stood, על העמוד *al haammud*, “upon the stairs or pulpit.” This is what is called the brazen scaffold or pulpit which Solomon made, and on which the kings were accustomed to stand when they addressed the people. See 2 Chronicles 6:13, and the parallel places.

**Made a covenant** This was expressed, 1. In general. To walk after Jehovah; to have no gods besides him. 2. To take his law for the regulation of their conduct. 3. In particular. To bend their whole heart and soul to the observance of it, so that, they might not only have religion without, but, piety within. To this all the people stood up, thus giving their consent, and binding themselves to obedience.

**Verse 4. The priests of the second order** These were probably such as supplied the place of the high priest when he was prevented: from fulfilling the functions of his office. So the Chaldee understood the place—the sagan of the high priests. But the words may refer to those of the second course or order established by David: though it does not appear that those orders were now in use, yet the distinction was continued even to the time of our Lord. We find the course of Abia, which was the eighth, mentioned Luke 1:5; where see the note.

**All the vessels** These had been used for idolatrous purposes; the king is now to destroy them; for although no longer used in this way, they might, if permitted to remain, be an incentive to idolatry at a future time.

**Verse 5. The idolatrous priests** חַכְמָרִים hakkemarim. Who these were is not well known. The Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, call them the priests simply, which the kings of Judah had ordained. Probably they were an order made by the idolatrous kings of Judah, and called kemarim, from כָּמַר camar, which signifies to be scorched, shriveled together, made dark, or black, because their business was constantly to attend sacrificial fires, and probably they were black garments; hence the Jews in derision call Christian ministers kemarim, because of their black clothes and garments. Why we should imitate, in our sacerdotal dress, those priests of Baal, is strange to think and hard to tell.

**Unto Baal, to the sun** Though Baal was certainly the sun, yet here they are distinguished; Baal being worshipped under different forms and attributes, Baal-peor, Baal-zephon, Baal-zebub, etc.

**The planets** מַזְלוֹת mazzaloth. The Vulgate translates this the twelve signs, i.e., the zodiac. This is as likely as any of the other conjectures which have been published relative to this word. See a similar word Job 37:9; 28:32.



**Verse 6. *He brought out the grove*** He brought out the idol Asherah. See at the end of 2 Kings 21:26.

***Upon the graves of the children of the people.*** I believe this; means the burial-place of the common people.

**Verse 7. *The houses of the sodomites*** We have already often met with these קדשים kedeshim or consecrated persons. The word implies all kinds of prostitutes, as well as abusers of themselves with mankind.

***Wove hangings for the grove.*** For Asherah; curtains or tent coverings for the places where the rites of the impure goddess were performed. See at the end of 2 Kings 21:26.

**Verse 8. *The gate of Joshua*** The place where he, as governor of the city, heard and decided causes. Near this we find there were public altars, where sometimes the true God, at other times false gods, were honored.

**Verse 9. *The priests of the high places came not up*** As these priests had offered sacrifices on the high places, though it was to the true God, yet they were not thought proper to be employed immediately about the temple; but as they were acknowledged to belong to the priesthood, they had a right to their support; therefore a portion of the tithes, offerings, and unleavened bread, shew-bread, etc., was appointed to them for their support. Thus they were treated as priests who had some infirmity which rendered it improper for them to minister at the altar. See Leviticus 21:17, etc., and particularly Leviticus 21:22, 23.

**Verse 10. *He defiled Topheth*** St. Jerome says that Topheth was a fine and pleasant place, well watered with fountains, and adorned with gardens. The valley of the son of Hinnom, or Gehenna, was in one part; here it appears the sacred rites of Molech were performed, and to this all the filth of the city was carried, and perpetual fires were kept up in order to consume it. Hence it has been considered a type of hell; and in this sense it is used in the New Testament.

It is here said that Josiah defiled this place that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire. He destroyed the image of Molech, and so polluted the place where he stood, or his temple, that it was rendered in every way abominable. The rabbins say that Topheth had

its name from **תוף** toph, a drum, because instruments of this kind were used to drown the cries of the children that were put into the burning arms of Molech, to be scorched to death. This may be as true as the following definition: “Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, was a place near Jerusalem, where the filth and offal of the city were thrown, and where a constant fire was kept up to consume the wretched remains of executed criminals. It was a human shambles, a public chopping-block, where the arms and legs of men and women were quartered off by thousands.”  
Query, On what authority do such descriptions rest?

**Verse 11. *The horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun.***

Jarchi says that those who adored the sun had horses which they mounted every morning to go out to meet the sun at his rising. Throughout the East the horse, because of his swiftness and utility, was dedicated to the sun; and the Greeks and Romans feigned that the chariot of the sun was drawn by four horses-Pyroeis, Eous, Aethon, and Phlegon. See the note on 2 Kings 2:11.

Whether these were living or sculptured horses, we cannot tell; the latter is the more reasonable supposition.

**Verse 12. *On the top of the upper chamber*** Altars built on the flat roof of the house. Such altars were erected to the sun, moon, stars, etc.

**Verse 13. *Mount of corruption*** This, says Jarchi, following the Chaldee, was the mount of Olives, for this is the mount **המשחה** hammishchah, of unction; but because of the idolatrous purposes for which it was used, the Scripture changed the appellation to the mount **המשחית** hammashchith, of corruption.

***Ashtoreth the abomination, etc.*** See on 1 Kings 11:7.

**Verse 14. *Filled their places with the bones of men.*** This was allowed to be the utmost defilement to which any thing could be exposed.

**Verse 16. *And as Josiah turned himself*** This verse is much more complete in the Septuagint, and in the Hexaplar Syriac version at Paris. I shall give the whole, making a distinction where, in those versions, any thing is added: “And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent and took the bones out of the

sepulchres, and burnt them upon the altar, and polluted it: according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed [when Jeroboam stood by the altar at the feast. And turning about, he cast his eyes on the sepulcher of the man of God] who proclaimed these words.” See 1 Kings 13:2, where these things were predicted, and see the notes there.

**Verse 17. *What title is that*** There was either a stone, an image, or an inscription here: the old prophet no doubt took care to have the place made sufficiently remarkable.

**Verse 18. *The prophet that came out of Samaria*** See the note on 1 Kings 13:32.

**Verse 19. *That were in the cities of Samaria*** Israel had now no king; and Josiah, of the blood royal of Judah, had certainly a direct right to the kingdom; he had, at this time, an especial commission from God, to reform every abuse through the whole land—all that ground that was given by the Lord as an inheritance to the twelve sons of Jacob. Therefore he had every right to carry his plans of reformation into the Samaritan states.

**Verse 20. *Slew all the priests*** The lives of these, as corrupters of the people, were forfeited to the law.

**Verse 22. *Surely there was not holden such a passover*** Not one on purer principles, more heartily joined in by the people present, more literally consecrated, or more religiously observed. The words do not apply to the number present, but to the manner and spirit. See the particulars and mode of celebrating this passover in 2 Chronicles 35:1-18.

**Verse 24. *The workers with familiar spirits*** See on 2 Kings 21:5.

***And the images*** The teraphim. See the note on Genesis 31:19.

**Verse 25. *Like unto him was there no king*** Perhaps not one from the time of David; and, morally considered, including David himself, none ever sat on the Jewish throne, so truly exemplary in his own conduct, and so thoroughly zealous in the work of God. David was a greater but not a better man than Josiah.

**Verse 26. *The Lord turned not*** It was of no use to try this fickle and radically depraved people any longer. They were respited merely during the life of Josiah.

**Verse 29. *In his days Pharaoh-nechoh*** See the note on the death of Josiah, 2 Kings 22:20.

Nechoh is supposed to have been the son of Psammitichus, king of Egypt; and the Assyrian king, whom he was now going to attack, was the famous Nabopolassar. What the cause of this quarrel was, is not known. Some say it was on account of Carchemish, a city on the Euphrates, belonging to the Egyptians, which Nabopolassar had seized. See Isaiah 10:9.

**Verse 30. *Dead from Megiddo*** The word מֵת meth should here be considered as a participle, dying, for it is certain he was not dead: he was mortally wounded at Megiddo, was carried in a dying state to Jerusalem, and there he died and was buried. See 2 Chronicles 35:24.

Herodotus, lib. i., c. 17, 18, 25, and lib. ii. 159, appears to refer to the same war which is here mentioned. He says that Nechoh, in the sixth year of his reign, went to attack the king of Assyria at Magdolum, gained a complete victory, and took Cadytis. Usher and others believe that Magdolum and Megiddo were the same place. The exact place of the battle seems to have been Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddo, for there Zechariah tells us 2 Kings 12:11, was the great mourning for Josiah. Compare this with 2 Chronicles 35:24, 25.

**Verse 31. *Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old*** This was not the eldest son of Josiah, which is evident from this, that he was twenty-three years old when he began to reign; that he reigned but three months; that, being dethroned, his brother Eliakim was put in his place, who was then twenty-five years of age. Eliakim, therefore, was the eldest brother; but Jehoahaz was probably raised to the throne by the people, as being of a more active and martial spirit.

**Verse 33. *Nechoh put him in bands*** But what was the cause of his putting him in bands? It is conjectured, and not without reason, that Jehoahaz, otherwise called Shallum, raised an army, met Nechoh in his return from Carchemish, fought, was beaten, taken prisoner, put in chains; and taken into Egypt, where he died; 2 Kings 23:34, and Jeremiah 22:11,

12. Riblah or Diblath, the place of this battle, was probably a town in Syria, in the land or district of Hamath.

**Verse 34. *Turned his name to Jehoiakim*** These names are precisely the same in signification: ELIAKIM is God shall arise; JEHOIAKIM, Jehovah shall arise; or, the resurrection of God; the resurrection of Jehovah. That is, God's rising again to show his power, justice, etc. The change of the name was to show Nechoh's supremacy, and that Jehoiakim was only his vassal or viceroy. Proofs of this mode of changing the name, when a person of greater power put another in office under himself, may be seen in the case of Mattaniah, changed into Zedekiah; Daniel, Mishael, Hananiah, and Azariah, into Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; and Joseph into Zaphnath-paaneah. See Daniel 1:6, 7; Genesis 41:45.

**Verse 35. *Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold*** Nechoh had placed him there as viceroy, simply to raise and collect his taxes.

***Every one according to his taxation*** That is, each was assessed in proportion to his property: that was the principle avowed: but there is reason to fear that this bad king was not governed by it.

**Verse 37. *He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord*** He was a most unprincipled and oppressive tyrant. Jeremiah gives us his character at large, 2 Kings 22:13-19, to which the reader will do well to refer. Jeremiah was at that time in the land, and was an eyewitness of the abominations of this cruel king.

## CHAPTER 24

*Nebuchadnezzar brings Jehoiakim under subjection; who, after three years, rebels, 1. Bands of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, invade the land, 2-4. Jehoiakim dies, and Jehoiachin his son reigns in his stead, 5, 6. The Babylonians overcome the Egyptians, 7.*

*Nebuchadnezzar takes Jehoiachin and his family, and all his treasures, and those of the temple, and all the chief people and artificers, and carries them to Babylon, 8-16; and makes Mattaniah, brother of Jehoiakim, king, who reigns wickedly, and rebels against the king of Babylon, 17-20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 24

**Verse 1. *Nebuchadnezzar*** This man, so famous in the writings of the prophets, was son of Nabopolassar. He was sent by his father against the rulers of several provinces that had revolted; and he took Carchemish, and all that belonged to the Egyptians, from the Euphrates to the Nile. Jehoiakim, who was tributary to Nechoh king of Egypt, he attacked and reduced; and obliged to become tributary to Babylon. At the end of three years he revolted; and then a mixed army, of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, was sent against him, who ravaged the country, and took three thousand and twenty-three prisoners, whom they brought to Babylon, Jeremiah 52:28.

**Verse 2. *According to the word of the Lord*** See what Huldah predicted, 2 Kings 22:16, and see chap. 14, 15, and 16 of Jeremiah.

**Verse 6. *Jehoiachin his son*** As this man reigned only three months and was a mere vassal to the Babylonians, his reign is scarcely to be reckoned; and therefore Jeremiah says of Jehoiakim, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David, 2 Kings 36:30, for at that time it belonged to the king of Babylon, and Jehoiachin was a mere viceroy or governor. Jehoiachin is called Jechonias in Matthew 1:11.

**Verse 7. *The king of Egypt came not again*** He was so crushed by the Babylonians that he was obliged to confine himself within the limits of his own states, and could no more attempt any conquests. The text tells us how much he had lost by the Babylonians. See on 2 Kings 24:1.

**Verse 8. *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old*** He is called Jeconiah, 1 Chronicles 3:16, and Coniah, Jeremiah 22:24. In 2 Chronicles 36:9, he is said to be only eight years of age, but this must be a mistake; for we find that, having reigned only three months, he was carried captive to Babylon, and there he had wives; and it is very improbable that a child between eight and nine years of age could have wives; and of such a tender age, it can scarcely be said that, as a king, he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. The place in Chronicles must be corrupted.

That he was a grievous offender against God, we learn from Jeremiah 22:24, which the reader may consult; and in the man's punishment, see his crimes.

**Verse 12. *Jehoiachin-went out*** He saw that it was useless to attempt to defend himself any longer; and he therefore surrendered himself, hoping to obtain better terms.

**Verse 13. *He carried out thence all the treasures*** It has been remarked that Nebuchadnezzar spoiled the temple three times. — 1. He took away the greater part of those treasures when he took Jerusalem under Jehoiakim: and the vessels that he took then he placed in the temple of his god, Daniel 1:2. And these were the vessels which Belshazzar profaned, Daniel 5:2; and which Cyrus restored to Ezra, when he went up to Jerusalem, Ezra 1:2. It was at this time that he took Daniel and his companions. 2. He took the remaining part of those vessels, and broke them or cut them in pieces, when he came the second time against Jerusalem under Jeconiah; as is mentioned here, 2 Kings 24:13. 3. He pillaged the temple, took away all the brass, the brazen pillars, brazen vessels, and vessels of gold and silver, which he found there when he besieged Jerusalem under Zedekiah, 2 Kings 25:13-17.

**Verse 14. *He carried away all Jerusalem*** That is, all the chief men, the nobles, and artificers. Among these there were of mighty men seven thousand; of craftsmen and smiths, one thousand.

**Verse 17. *Made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead*** He was the son of Josiah, and brother to Jehoiakim.

***Changed his name to Zedekiah.*** See the note on 2 Kings 23:34.

**Verse 19. *He did-evil*** How astonishing is this! not one of them takes warning by the judgments of God, which fell on their sinful predecessors.

**Verse 20. *Zedekiah rebelled*** This was in the eighth year of his reign: and he is strongly reprov'd for having violat'd the oath he took to the king of Babylon: see 2 Chronicles 36:13. This was the filling up of the measure of iniquity; and now the wrath of God descends upon this devoted king, city, and people, to the uttermost. See the catastrophe in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 25

*Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem; it is taken, after having been sorely reduced by famine, etc.; and Zedekiah, endeavoring to make his escape, is made prisoner, his sons slain before his eyes; then, his eyes being put out, he is put in chains and carried to Babylon, 1-7. Nebuzar-adan burns the temple, breaks down the walls of Jerusalem, and carries away the people captives, leaving only a few to till the ground, 8-12. He takes away all the brass, and all the vessels of the temple, 13-17. Several of the chief men and nobles found in the city, he brings to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, who puts them all to death, 18-21. Nebuchadnezzar makes Gedaliah governor over the poor people that were left, against whom Ishmael rises, and slays him, and others with him; on which the people in general, fearing the resentment of the Chaldeans, flee to Egypt, 22-26. Evil-merodach, king of Babylon, releases Jehoiachin out of prison, treats him kindly, and makes him his friend, 27-30.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 25

**Verse 1.** *In the ninth year of his reign* Zedekiah, having revolted against the Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar, wearied with his treachery, and the bad faith of the Jews, determined the total subversion of the Jewish state. Having assembled a numerous army, he entered Judea on the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah; this, according to the computation of Archbishop Usher, was on Thursday, January 30, A.M. 3414, which was a sabbatical year: whereon the men of Jerusalem hearing that the Chaldean army was approaching, proclaimed liberty to their servants; see Jeremiah 34:8-10, according to the law, Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:1, 2, 12: for Nebuchadnezzar, marching with his army against Zedekiah, having wasted all the country, and taken their strong holds, except Lachish, Azekah, and Jerusalem, came against the latter with all his forces. See Jeremiah 34:1-7. On the very day, as the same author computes, the siege and utter destruction of Jerusalem were revealed to Ezekiel the prophet, then in Chaldea, under the type of a seething pot; and

his wife died in the evening, and he was charged not to mourn for her, because of the extraordinary calamity that had fallen upon the land. See Ezekiel 24:1, 2, etc.

Jeremiah, having predicted the same calamities, Jeremiah 34:1-7, was by the command of Zedekiah shut up in prison, Jeremiah 32:1-16.

Pharaoh Hophra, or Vaphris, hearing how Zedekiah was pressed, and fearing for the safety of his own dominions should the Chaldeans succeed against Jerusalem, determined to succor Zedekiah. Finding this, the Chaldeans raised the siege of Jerusalem, and went to meet the Egyptian army, which they defeated and put to flight. Joseph. Antiq., lib. 10, cap. 10. In the interim the Jews, thinking their danger was passed, reclaimed their servants, and put them again under the yoke; Jeremiah 34:8, etc.

**Verse 2.** — 4. *And the city was besieged, etc.* Nebuchadnezzar, having routed the Egyptian army, returned to Jerusalem, and besieged it so closely that, being reduced by famine, and a breach made in the wall, the Chaldeans entered it on the ninth day of the fourth month, (Wednesday, July 27,) Zedekiah and many others endeavoring to make their escape by night.

**Verse 3.** See “2 Kings 25:2”.

**Verse 4.** See “2 Kings 25:2”.

**Verse 5.** *The army of the Chaldeans pursued* Zedekiah was taken, and brought captive to Riblah in Syria, where Nebuchadnezzar then lay, who ordered his sons to be slain before his face, and then put out his eyes; and having loaded him with chains, sent him to Babylon, (see Jeremiah 39:4, 7; 52:7, 11,) thus fulfilling the prophetic declarations, that his eyes should see the eyes of the king of Babylon, Jeremiah 32:4; 34:3; but Babylon he should not see, though he was to die there; Ezekiel 12:13.

**Verse 8.** *In the fifth month* On the seventh day of the fifth month, (answering to Wednesday, Aug. 24,) Nebuzar-adan made his entry into the city; and having spent two days in making provision, on the tenth day of the same month, (Saturday, Aug. 27,) he set fire to the temple and the king’s palace, and the houses of the nobility, and burnt them to the ground; Jeremiah 52:13, compared with Jeremiah 39:8. Thus the temple was destroyed in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the nineteenth of

Nebuchadnezzar, the first of the XLVIIIth Olympiad, in the one hundred and sixtieth current year of the era of Nabonassar, four hundred and twenty-four years three months and eight days from the time in which Solomon laid its foundation stone.

**Verse 10. *Brake down the walls*** In the same fifth month, Jeremiah 1:3, the walls of Jerusalem being razed to the ground, all that were left in the city, and all that had fled over formerly to Nebuchadnezzar, and all the common people of the city, with all the king's treasures, those of the nobles, and the whole furniture of the temple, did Nebuzar-adan carry off to Babylon. See Jeremiah 39:8, 9; 52:14, 23. And thus was Judah carried away out of her own land, four hundred and sixty-eight years after David began to reign over it; from the division of the ten tribes three hundred and eighty-eight years; and from the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, one hundred and thirty-four years; A.M. 3416, and before Christ five hundred and ninety. And thus ends what is called the fifth age of the world. See USHER'S Annals.

**Verse 18. *Seraiah the chief priest-Zephaniah*** The person who is here called the second priest was what the Jews call sagan, a sort of deputy, who performed the functions of the high priest when he was prevented by any infirmity from attending the temple service. See on 2 Kings 23:4.

**Verse 19. *And five men of them that were in the king's presence*** These were principal counselors, and confidential officers.

In Jeremiah 52:25, it is said he took seven men who were near the king's person, and the same number is found in the Arabic in this place; and the Chaldee has no less than fifty men; but in Jeremiah this, as well as all the rest of the versions, reads seven. Probably they were no more than five at first, or, perhaps Jeremiah reckoned with the five the officer that was set over the men of war, and the principal scribe of the host mentioned here, as two with the five; and thus made seven in the whole.

**Verse 21. *The king of Babylon smote them*** He had, no doubt, found that these had counselled Zedekiah to revolt.

**Verse 22. *Made Gedaliah-ruler.*** This was no regal dignity; he was only a sort of hind or overseer, appointed to regulate the husbandmen.

**Verse 23. *To Mizpah*** This is said to have been situated on the east side of the river Jordan, and most contiguous to Babylon, and therefore the most proper for the residence of Gedaliah, because nearest to the place from which he was to receive his instructions. But there were several places of this name, and we do not exactly know where this was situated.

**Verse 24. *Gedaliah sware to them*** He pledged himself in the most solemn manner to encourage and protect them.

**Verse 25. *Smote Gedaliah*** This was at an entertainment which Gedaliah had made for them; see Jeremiah 41:1, etc. He was not content with this murder, but slew fourscore more, who were coming with offerings to the temple, and took several as prisoners, among whom were some of the king's daughters; and set off to go to the Ammonites: but Johanan, the son of Careah, hearing of these outrages, raised a number of men, and pursued Ishmael upon which Ishmael's prisoners immediately turned and joined Johanan; so that he, and eight of his accomplices, with difficulty escaped to the Ammonites. See Jeremiah 41:1, etc. Baalis, king of the Ammonites, had sent Ishmael to murder Gedaliah; and of this he was informed by Johanan, who offered to prevent it, by taking away the life of this murderer. But Gedaliah could not believe that he harbored such foul designs, and therefore took no precaution to save his life. See Jeremiah 40:13-16.

**Verse 27. *And it came to pass*** Nebuchadnezzar was just now dead; and Evil-merodach, his son, succeeded to the kingdom in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin: and on the seven and twentieth day [Jeremiah says five and twentieth] of the twelfth month of that year, (Tuesday, April 15, A.M. 3442,) he brought the long captivated Jewish king out of prison; treated him kindly; and ever after, during his life, reckoned him among the king's friends. This is particularly related in the four last verses of the book of Jeremiah.

**Verse 30. *A continual allowance given him of the king*** He lived in a regal style, and had his court even in the city of Babylon, being supplied with every requisite by the munificence and friendship of the king. In about two years after this, Evil-merodach was slain in a conspiracy; and it is supposed that Jehoiachin, then about fifty-eight years of age, fell with his friend and protector. Thus terminates the catastrophe of the Jewish

kings, people, and state; the consequence of unheard-of rebellions and provocations against the Majesty of heaven.

## **MASORETIC NOTES ON THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF KINGS**

WE have already seen that the Hebrews consider these two books as one:—

The NUMBER of verses in both is one thousand five hundred and thirty-four.

MASORETIC SECTIONS, thirty-five.

MIDDLE VERSE, 1 Kings 21:6. And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me, etc.

# PREFACE TO THE TWO BOOKS

OF

## CHRONICLES

ANCIENTLY these two books were considered but as one: for this we have not only the testimony of St. Jerome, but also that of the Masorettes, who gave the sum of all the sections, chapters, and verses, under one notation at the end of the second book, without mentioning any division; and although the modern Jews divide them, yet they give the Masoretic enumeration of sections, etc., as it was given of old; and all editors of the Masoretic Bibles, whether Jewish or Christian, follow the same plan.

These books have had several names. In Hebrew they are denominated **דִּבְרֵי הַיָּמִים** *dibrey haiyamim*; literally, The Words of the Days, i.e., The Journals, particularly of the kings of Israel and kings of Judah. But this name does not appear to have been given by the inspired writer.

The Syriac has, The Book of the Transactions in the days of the Kings of Judah: which is called, *Dibrey Yamim*; referring to the Hebrew title.

The Arabic has, The Book of the Annals, which is called in Hebrew, *Dibrey Haiyamim*.

The Septuagint has, **παρᾶλειπομένων**, of the things that were left or omitted; supposing that these books were a supplement either to Samuel and to the books of Kings, or to the whole Bible. To this the Greek translators might have been led by finding that these books in their time closed the Sacred Canon, as they still do in the most correct editions of the Hebrew Bible.

The Vulgate uses the same term as the Septuagint, referring, like the Syriac and Arabic, to the Hebrew name.

In our English Bibles these books are termed Chronicles, from the Greek **χρονικά**, from **χρονος**, i.e., A History of Times; or, as the matter of the work shows, “A History of Times, Kingdoms, States, Religion, etc., with an Account of the most memorable Persons and Transactions of those Times and Nations.”

Concerning the author of these books, nothing certain is known. Some think they are the works of different authors; but the uniformity of the style, the connection of the facts, together with the recapitulations and reflections which are often made, prove that they are the work of one and the same person.

The Jews, and Christian interpreters in general, believe they were the work of EZRA, assisted by the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. That EZRA was the author is, on the whole, the most probable opinion. That he lived at the conclusion of the Babylonish captivity is well known; and the second book of Chronicles terminates at that period, barely reciting the decree of Cyrus to permit the return of the captivated Israelites to their own land; which subject is immediately taken up in the book of Ezra, in which the operation of that decree is distinctly marked.

There are words and terms, both in Chronicles and Ezra, which are similar, and prove that each was written after the captivity, and probably by the same person, as those terms were not in use previously to that time, and some of them are peculiar to Ezra himself: e.g., we have **כפורי זהב** kipporey zahab, “golden cups;” Ezra 1:10; 8:27; and in 1 Chronicles 28:17; and **דרכמו** darkemon or drakmon, “a drachma” or; drachm, 1 Chronicles 29:7; Ezra 2:69; Nehemiah 7:70; and **רפסדות** raphsodoth, “rafts” or floats, 2 Chronicles 2:16, widely differing from **דברות** doberoth, 1 Kings 5:9, which we there translate in the same way. Calmet considers these words as strong evidence that these books were the work of Ezra, and penned after the captivity.

We are not to suppose that these books are the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and Israel so often referred to in the historical books of the Old Testament; these have been long lost, and the books before us can only be abridgments, either of such chronicles, or of works of a similar kind.

That the ancient Jews took great care to register their civil, military, and ecclesiastical transactions, is sufficiently evident from frequent reference to such works in the sacred writings; and that these registers were carefully and correctly formed, we learn from the character of the persons by whom they were compiled: they were in general prophets, and seem to have been employed by the kings under whom they lived to compile the annals of their reigns; or most likely this was considered a part of the prophet's regular office.

Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, wrote under the reign of DAVID; 1 Chronicles 29:29.

The acts of the reign of SOLOMON were written by Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo; 2 Chronicles 9:29.

Shemaiah and Iddo wrote those of REHOBOAM; 2 Chronicles 12:15.

Iddo wrote also those of ABIJAH; 2 Chronicles 13:22.

It is likely that Hanani the seer wrote those of Asa; 2 Chronicles 16:7.

Jehu the prophet, the son of Hanani, 1 Kings 16:1, 7, wrote the acts of JEHOSHAPHAT; 2 Chronicles 20:34. Under this same reign we find Jahaziel the prophet, 2 Chronicles 20:14; and Eliezer the prophet, 2 Chronicles 5:37.

Isaiah recorded the transactions of UZZIAH, 2 Chronicles 26:22; and those of HEZEKIAH, 2 Chronicles 32:32; and of AHAZ, of whose reign we find the principal facts in the fifth, sixth, and ninth chapters of his prophecies. Under this reign we find Oded the prophet, 2 Chronicles 28:9.

Hosea wrote the history of the reign of MANASSEH. See 2 Chronicles 33:19, in the margin.

And Jeremiah wrote the history of JOSIAH and his descendants, the last kings of Judah.

This was such a succession of historians as no nation of the world could ever boast. Men, all of whom wrote under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit; some of whom had minds the most highly cultivated, and of the most extraordinary powers. Whether the prophets who flourished in the reigns of the kings of Israel wrote the annals of those kings, we know not,



because it is not positively declared. We know that Ahijah the Shilonite lived under JEROBOAM, the son of Nebat; 1 Kings 11:29; 14:2; and Jehu, son of Hanani, under BAASHA; 1 Kings 16:7.

Elijah and many others flourished under the reign of AHAB. Elisha, Jonah, and many more, succeeded him in the prophetic office.

Besides these prophets and prophetic men, we find other persons, whose office it was to record the transactions of the kings under whom they lived. These were called secretaries or recorders; so, under DAVID and SOLOMON, Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder. **מִזְכִּיר** mazkir, “remembrancer;” 2 Samuel 8:16, and 1 Chronicles 18:15. And under HEZEKIAH we find Joah, the son of Asaph; 2 Kings 18:18. And under JOSIAH, Joah the son of Joahaz, who filled the office; 2 Chronicles 34:8.

The real object of the author of these books is not very easy to be ascertained. But it is evident that he never could have intended them as a supplement to the preceding books, as he relates many of the same circumstances which occur in them, and often in greater detail; and, except by way of amplification, adds very little that can be called new, and omits many things of importance, not only in the ancient history of the Israelites, but even of those mentioned in the preceding books of Samuel and Kings. Nine chapters of his work are occupied with extensive genealogical tables, but even these are far from being perfect. His history, properly speaking, does not begin till the tenth chapter, and then it commences abruptly with the last unsuccessful battle of Saul and his death, but not a word of his history.

Though the writer gives many curious and important particulars in the life of David, yet he passes by his adultery with Bath-sheba, and all its consequences. He says nothing of the incest of Amnon with his sister Tamar, nor a word of the rebellion and abominations of Absalom. He says very little of the kings of Israel, and takes no notice of what concerned that state, from the capture of Amaziah king of Judah by Joash king of Israel; 2 Chronicles 25:17, etc. And of the last wars of these kings, which terminated in the captivity of the ten tribes, he says not one word!

The principal design of the writer appears to have been this: to point out, from the public registers, which were still preserved, what had been the

state of the different families previously to the captivity, that at their return they might enter on and repossess their respective inheritances. He enters particularly into the functions, genealogies, families, and orders of the priests and Levites; and this was peculiarly necessary after the return from the captivity, to the end that the worship of God might be conducted in the same way as before, and by the proper legitimate persons.

He is also very particular relative to what concerns religion, the worship of God, the temple and its utensils, the kings who authorized or tolerated idolatry, and those who maintained the worship of the true God. In his distribution of praise and blame, these are the qualities which principally occupy his attention, and influence his pen.

It may be necessary to say something here concerning the utility of these books. That they are in this respect in low estimation, we may learn from the manner in which they are treated by commentators: they say very little concerning them, and suppose the subject has been anticipated in the books of Samuel and Kings. That the persons who treat them thus have never studied them, is most evident, else their judgment would be widely different. Whatever history these books possess, in common with the books of Samuel and Kings, may, in a commentary, be fairly introduced in the examination of the latter; and this I have endeavored to do, as the reader may have already seen. But there are various details, and curious facts and observations, which must be considered in these books alone: nor will a slight mention of such circumstances do them justice.

St. Jerome had the most exalted opinion of the books of Chronicles. According to him, “they are an epitome of the Old Testament.” He asserts, that “they are of such high moment and importance, that he who supposes himself to be acquainted with the sacred writings, and does not know them, only deceives himself; and that innumerable questions relative to the Gospel are here explained.” *Paralipomenon liber, id est, Instrumenti Veteris επιτομη*, tantus ac talis est, ut abeque illo, si quis scientiam Scripturarum sibi voluerit arrogare, seipsum irrideat. Per singula quippe nomina, juncturasque verborum, et praetermissae in REGUM libris tanguntur historiae, et innumerabiles explicantur Evangelii Quaestiones. — Epis. Secund. ad Paulinum Presbyterum., OPER. Edit. Benedict. vol. iv., col. 574. And in another place he asserts, that “all Scripture knowledge is

contained in these books;” *Omnis eruditio Scripturarum in hoc libro continetur.* — Praefat. in lib. Paral. *justa Septuaginta Interpret OPER.* Edit. Bened., vol. i., col. 1418. This may be going too far; but St. Jerome believed that there was a mystery and meaning in every proper name, whether of man, woman, city, or country, in the book. And yet he complains greatly of the corruption of those names, some having been divided, so as to make two or three names out of one, and sometimes names condensed, so as of three names to make but one. To cure this evil he labored hard, and did much; but still the confusion is great, and in many cases past remedy. To assist the reader in this respect I wish to refer him to the marginal readings and parallel texts, which are here carefully represented in the inner margin; these should be constantly consulted, as they serve to remove many difficulties and reconcile several seeming contradictions. In addition to these helps I have carefully examined the different ancient versions, and the various readings in the MSS. of Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi, which often help to remove such difficulties.

There is one mode of exposition which I have applied to these books, which has not, as far as I know, been as yet used: I mean the Targum, or Chaldee Paraphrase, of Rabbi JOSEPH. It is well known to all oriental scholars, that a Chaldee Targum, or Paraphrase, has been found and published in the Polyglots, on every book of the Old Testament, purely Hebrew, the books of Chronicles excepted. Neither in the Complutensian, Antwerp, Parisian, nor London Polyglot, is such a Targum to be found; none having been discovered when these works were published. But shortly after the London Polyglot was finished, a MS. was found in the University of Cambridge, containing the Targum on these books: this, with several other pieces, Arabic, Persian, Syriac, etc., Dr. Samuel Clarke collected, and intended to publish, as a supplementary volume to the Polyglot, but was prevented by premature death. The MS. was afterwards copied by Mr. David Wilkins, and printed, with a Latin translation, at Amsterdam, quarto, 1715. Of this work the reader will find I have made a liberal use, as I have of the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, on the preceding books. Rabbi Joseph, the author, lived about three hundred years after the destruction of the second temple, or about A.D. 400. The MS. in question formerly belonged to the celebrated Erpen, and was

purchased by the duke of Buckingham, then Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and by him presented to the public library of that University.

It is worthy of remark, that the term **מִמְרָא** meymera, “word,” and **דִּי מִמְרָא** meymera dayeya, “the word of Jehovah,” is used personally in this Targum; never as a word spoken, but as a PERSON acting: see the notes on John 1:1.

The first book of Chronicles contains a sort of genealogical history from the creation of the world to the death of David, A.M. 2989.

# THE FIRST BOOK

OF

# THE CHRONICLES

## Chronological Notes relative to this Book

- Year of the World, 1.
- Year before Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 4004.
- Year before the Flood, according to the common Hebrew Bible, 1656.
- Year of the Julian period, 710.

## CHAPTER 1

*The genealogy of Adam to Noah, 1-3. Of Noah to Abraham, 4-27. The sons of Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac, 28. The sons of Ishmael, 29-31. {The sons of Keturah, 32, 33.} The sons of Esau, 34-42. A list of the kings of Edom, 43-50. A list of the dukes of Edom, 51-54.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1.** *Adam, Sheth, Enosh* That is, Adam was the father of Sheth or Seth. Seth was the father of Enosh, Enosh the father of Kenan, and so on. No notice is taken of Cain and Abel, or of any of the other sons of Adam. One line of patriarchs, from Adam to Noah, is what the historian intended to give; and to have mentioned the posterity of Cain or Abel would have been useless, as Noah was not the immediate descendant of either. Besides, all their posterity had perished in the deluge, none remaining of the Adamic

family but Noah and his children; and from these all the nations of the earth sprang.

How learned must those men be who can take for a text “The first verse of the first chapter of the first book of CHRONICLES.” and find a mystery in each name; which, in the aggregate, amounts to a full view of the original perfection, subsequent fall, consequent misery, and final restoration, of MAN! O ye profound illustrators of the names of men and cities! why do ye not give us the key of your wisdom, write comments, and enlighten the world?

**Verse 5.** After Tiras, the Targum adds, “And the names of their countries were Africa, and Germany, and Media, and Macedonia, Bithynia, and Maesia, and Thrace.” And in another copy, “Germany, Getia, and Media, and Ephesus, Bithynia, and Maesia, and Thrace.”

**Verse 6.** To this verse the Targum adds, “And the names of their countries were Asia, and Persia, and Barbary.”

**Verse 7. *The sons of Javan*** “But the sons of Macedon, Alsu, and Tarsus, Ilation, and Dardania, or, according to others, Elisha, Alam, Titsas, Achzavia, and Dardania, Ridom, and Chamen, and Antioch.” So says this Targum, which I shall henceforth designate by the letter T.

**Verse 8. *The sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim*** “Arabia and Egypt.” -T.

**Verse 9. *Seba, and Havilah*** “Sindi and Hindi, and Semadaei, and Libyes and the Zingitae; but the sons of the Mauritanians, Demargad and Mesag.” -T.

**Verse 10. *He began to be mighty upon the earth.*** “He began to be bold in sin, a murderer of the innocent, and a rebel before the Lord.” -T.

**Verse 11. *Ludim, etc.*** “The Nivitaei, the Mariotaei, the Libakaei, and the Pentaskenaei.” -T.

**Verse 12. *Caphthorim.*** “The Cappadocians.” -T.

**Verse 13. *Canaan begat Zidon*** “Canaan begat Bothniam, his first-born, who built Sidon.” -T.

**Verse 19. *The name of the one was Peleg*** “Because in his days the inhabitants of the earth were divided according to their languages. And the name of his brother was Joktan, because in his days the years of men began to be shortened, on account of their iniquities.” -T.

**Verse 20. *Joktan begat Almodad*** “He divided and measured the earth by lines. Sheleph; he assigned rivers to be boundaries. Hazarmaveth; he prepared a place of snares to kill by the highways. Jerah; he built inns, and when any person came to eat and drink, he gave him deadly poison, and so took his property.” -T.

According to these traditions, the two first were geographers; the third, a public robber; and the fourth, an unprincipled innkeeper, who gave poison to his rich guests, that he might get their property. Such things have been done even in modern times.

**Verse 23. *And Ophir*** “Whence gold is brought.” And Havilah; “whence pearls are brought.” -T.

**Verse 24. *Shem*** “The great priest.” -T.

**Verse 32. *Keturah, Abraham’s concubine*** Abraham’s pilegish, or wife of the second rank; she was neither whore, harlot, nor concubine, in our sense of these words.

**Verse 43. *Before any king reigned over-Israel*** See Genesis 36:31, etc., where the same verses occur, as I have supposed borrowed from this place; and see the notes there.

***Bela the son of Beor*** “Balaam the impious son of Beor, the same as Laban the Syrian, who formed a confederacy with the sons of Esau, to destroy Jacob and his children; and he studied to destroy them utterly. Afterwards he reigned in Sodom; and the name of his royal city was Dinhabah, because it was undeservedly given to him.” -T.

**Verse 44. *Bela was dead*** “Being killed by Phineas, in the wilderness.” -T.

***Jobab the son of Zerah*** Supposed by some to be the same as Job, whose book forms a part of the canon of Scripture. But in their names there is no similarity; Job being written אִיּוֹב *aiyob*; Jobab, יוֹבָב *yobab*. See the notes on Job, and the parallel place in Genesis.

**Verse 46. *Smote Midian*** Nothing is known of this war.

**Verse 48. *By the river*** “Shaul of Plathiutha, a great city, built on the banks of the Euphrates.” -T.

**Verse 50. *Daughter of Mezahab***. This word מֵי זָהָב *mey zahab*, is literally the golden waters; or What is gold? The Targumist paraphrases thus: “Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, was so earnest and diligent in business that she became immensely rich; but when she was converted, she said, What is this silver, and What is this gold? That is, They are of no real worth.”

**Verse 51. *Hadad died*** “And his kingdom ended; for his land was subdued by the children of Esau, and the dukes of Edom ruled in the land of Gebala.” -T.

For various particulars in this chapter, see Gen. 10 and 36, and the parallel places.



## CHAPTER 2

*The twelve sons of Jacob, 1, 2. The posterity of Judah down to David, 3-15. The posterity of the children of Jesse and Caleb, 16-55.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. *These are the sons of Israel*** For this genealogy see the parallel places pointed out in the margin.

**Verse 6. *Five of them in all.*** “These were all chief men; and on them the spirit of prophecy rested.” -T.

**Verse 17. *Jether the Ishmeelite.*** “They called him Jether, because he girded himself with his sword, that he might assist David with the Arabians, when Abner was endeavoring to destroy David and the whole race of Jesse, as being unfit to enter into the congregation of the Lord, on account of Ruth the Moabitess.” -T.

**Verse 18. *Azubah*** “And why was she called Azubah? Because she was barren and despised. But her injury was manifested before the Lord; and she was comforted, and adorned with wisdom; and she span, skilfully, goats’ hair for the court of the tabernacle.” -T.

**Verse 20. *Uri begat Bezaleel*** This was probably the famous artist mentioned Exodus 31:2, etc., where see the notes.

**Verse 34. *Whose name was Jarha.*** “And he gave him his liberty, and gave him Sheshan his daughter to wife.” -T.

**Verse 42. *Now the sons of Caleb*** This was not Caleb the son of Jephunneh, but Caleb the son of Hezron, 1 Chronicles 2:18, 50. But some think that Caleb the son of Hezron was the grandson of Caleb, son of Jephunneh; but this is probably fanciful.

***The father of Ziph*** “The prince of the Ziphites.” -T.

**Verse 52. *Shobal-had sons*** “Disciples and priests, to whom belonged the half of the oblations.” -T.

**Verse 53. *The families of Kirjath-jearim*** “These were the children of Moses, which Zipporah bare to him, viz., the Jethrites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraitites; of these came the disciples of the prophets Zarah and Eshtaol.” -T.

**Verse 54. *The sons of Salma*** “The righteous Bethlehemites, who had a good name, as the Netophathites, who removed the guards which Jeroboam had placed in the way lest the people should carry the first-fruits to Jerusalem: for the sons of Salma carried baskets full of first-fruits privately to Jerusalem; and having cloven wood, they made ladders, and brought them to Jerusalem to be laid up in Beth-mokad for oblations. These came from the lineage of Joab the son of Zeruah; and some of them were priests; and they divided the residue of the sacrifices with the sons of the prophets who were in Zorah.” -T.

**Verse 55. *The families*** “The families of the Rechabites, the sons of Eliezer the son of Misco, the disciple of Jabez; he was Othniel, the son of Kenaz. And he was called Jabez, because in his council he instituted a school of disciples; they were called Tirathim, because in their hymns their voice was like trumpets; and Shimathim, because in hearing they lifted up their faces, i.e., in prayer; and Suchathim, because they were overshadowed by the Spirit of prophecy. These Salmaei were the children of Zipporah, who were numbered among the Levites who came from the stock of Moses, the master of Israel, whose righteousness profited them more than chariots and horses.” -T. See on 1 Chronicles 4:9, 10.

Is the above explanation of Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Suchathites, the Targumist refers to the import of the Hebrew roots, whence these names are derived. See 1 Chronicles 4:10. In this chapter many names of cities are given as the names of men.

## CHAPTER 3

*The children of David which were born to him in Hebron, 1-4. Those born to him in Jerusalem, 5-9. The regal line from Solomon, 10-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *The second, Daniel*** In 2 Samuel 3:3, this person is called Chileab; he probably had two names. The Targum says, “The second, Daniel, who was also called Chileab, because he was in every respect like to his father.” The Targumist refers here to the import of the word כּלֵאב ke-le-ab, like to the father. Jarchi says the two names were given to this person because David, having taken Abigail immediately after the death of Nabal, it could not be ascertained whether this child were the son of David or of Nabal, therefore David called him דְּנִיאֵל Daniel, God is my Judge, and כּלֵאב Chileab, he who is like to the father; probably from the striking resemblance he bore to David, his reputed father. “God is my Judge, I have not fathered another man’s child; this is entirely like unto myself.”

**Verse 3. *By Eglah his wife***. The Targum, Jarchi, and others, maintain that this was Michal, the daughter of Saul; but this does not well agree with 2 Samuel 6:23: Michal had no child to the day of her death. Yet she might have had a child before the time that is mentioned above.

**Verse 5. *Shimea, and Shobab*** Solomon is mentioned last, though he was the eldest of these four sons, because the genealogy was to be continued from him. Bath-shua בַּת שׁוּעַ is the same as Bath-sheba, בַּת שֶׁבַע the וּ vau being put by mistake in the former for בֵּי beth in the latter.

**Verse 6. *Elishama, and Eliphelet*** In this and the eighth verse these two names occur twice; some think this is a mistake, but others suppose that two persons of these names died young, and that the next born received the name of the deceased. — See Jarchi.

**Verse 8. *Nine*** . There are thirteen if we count the four sons of Bath-sheba, and nine without them; and in the second book of Samuel there are eleven, reckoning the above four, and without them only seven. In the book of Samuel probably only those who were alive were reckoned, while the author of the Chronicles comprises those also who were dead in this enumeration. Jarchi supposes that the duplicate Elishama and Eliphelet are those which increase the regular number seven to nine; and that the dead without posterity, as well as the living, are mentioned to increase the number of David's descendants; for, says he, the whole book is written for the honor of David and his seed.

**Verse 9. *And Tamar their sister*** . This is the only daughter of David whose name is on record; and yet he is said to have had both SONS and DAUGHTERS, 2 Samuel 5:13.

**Verse 16. *Zedekiah his son*** . If this be the same who was the last king of Judah, before the captivity, the word son must be taken here to signify successor; for it is certain that Zedekiah was the successor of Jeconiah, and that Zedekiah was the son of Josiah, and not of Jehoiakim.

**Verse 17. *The sons of Jeconiah*** Jeremiah has said (Jeremiah 22:30) that Jeconiah, or, as he calls him, Coniah, should be childless; but this must refer to his posterity being deprived of the throne, and indeed thus the prophet interprets it himself: For no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

**Assir** Salathiel was not the son of Assir, but of Jeconiah, Matthew 1:12. Who then was Assir? Possibly nobody; for as the Hebrew אַסִּיר *assir* signifies a prisoner, it may be considered as an epithet of Jeconiah, who we know was a very long time prisoner in Babylon. See 2 Kings 24:15 and Calmet.

**Verse 18. *Malchiram also*** Calmet supposes we should read here, And the sons of Salathiel were Malchiram and Pedaiah, etc.

**Verse 19. *The sons of Pedaiah*** Houbigant thinks these words should be omitted. Pedaiah is wanting in the Arabic and Syriac. If this be omitted, Zerubbabel will appear to be the son of Salathiel, according to Matthew 1:12, and not the son of Pedaiah, as here stated.

**Verse 22. *The sons of Shemaiah*-six.** FIVE only are found in the text, and the versions give us no assistance; neither do the MSS. correct the place. If the father be not here included with his sons, some name must be lost out of the text.

**Verse 24. *And Anani*** “This is the King Messiah who is to be revealed.” -T. Jarchi says the same, and refers to Daniel 7:13: Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds (ענני ananey) of heaven. For this application of the word he gives a fanciful reason, not worthy to be repeated. The Syriac and Arabic omit several names in this table, and make only twenty-three verses in the chapter: but such differences are frequent in the books of Chronicles.

## CHAPTER 4

*A second genealogy of Judah, 1-23. The account of Jabez, 9, 10. The genealogy of Simeon, 24-27. Their cities, 28-31. Their villages, and where situated, 32, 33. The heads of families, 34-38. Where they settled; and what was their occupation, 39-43.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1. *The sons of Judah*** A genealogy of this tribe has already been given in the second chapter. It is here introduced again, with some variations. Probably there were different copies in the public registers; and the writer of this book, finding that this second one contained some remarkable particulars, thought proper to insert it in this place: and no reader will regret the insertion, when he carefully considers the matter.

**Verse 3. *These were of the father of Etam*** “And these are the rabbins (doctors) living at Etam, Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash.” -T.

**Verse 7. *And Ethnan***. After this word we should, with the Targum, read Coz, whose posterity is mentioned in the next verse. Coz was probably the same as Kenaz.

**Verse 8. *The son of Harum***. Jabez should be mentioned at the end of this verse, else he is as a consequent without an antecedent.

**Verse 9. *And Jabez was more honorable*** This whole account is variously understood by some of the principal versions. I shall subjoin a translation of each.

SEPTUAGINT. — “And Igabes was more glorious than his brethren; and his mother called his name Igabes, saying, I have brought thee forth as Gabes. And Igabes invoked the God of Israel, saying, If in blessing thou wilt bless me, and enlarge my borders, and thy hand be with me, and wilt give me understanding not to depress me: and God brought about all that he requested.”

SYRIAC. — “And one of these was dear to his father and to his mother; and he called his name [S] ainai, My Eye. And he said to him, In blessing may the Lord bless thee, and enlarge thy boundary; and may his hand be with thee; and may he preserve thee from evil, that it may not rule over thee; and may he give to thee whatsoever thou shalt request of him!”

Arabic. — “And this one (Hastahar or Harum) was beloved of his father and his mother: and they called his name [A] aina, My Eye; and they said unto him, May the Lord bless thee, and multiply thy people, and may his hand be present with thee, because thou wast born in Beth-lehem!”

These two latter versions seem to have copied each other, and the Vulgate is nearly, like ours, a literal rendering of the Hebrew; but the Chaldee is widely different from all the rest:—

CHALDEE. — “And Jabets also, he is Othniel, honorable and skilled in the law beyond his brethren, whose mother called his name Jabets, because she had borne him with sorrow. And Jabets prayed to the God of Israel, saying, O that in blessing thou wouldest bless me with children, and enlarge my borders with disciples; and that thy hand may be with me in business, that thou mayest make me like to my companions, that evil concupiscence may the less grieve me! And the Lord granted that which he prayed for.”

Of this honorable person we know nothing but what is here mentioned, nor does the name occur in any other part of Scripture except in 1 Chronicles 2:55, where it appears to be the name of a place, but is understood by the Chaldee to be the name of a person, as here. Though I have noticed this particularly in the note on that place, yet I think it right to add the Chaldee here, that all that concerns this worthy person may be seen at one view:—

1 Chronicles 2:55: “The families of the Rechabites, the son of Eliezer, the son of Moses, the disciples of Jabets; he was Othniel, the son of Kenaz. And he was called Jabets, **יַבֶּטֶץ** Yabets, because in his counsel [**בְּעִצְתִּיהָ** beqtsatih, from Ueq qaats, he counselled, advised, etc.] he instituted a school for disciples. They were called Tirathim, **תִּרְעָתִים**, because in their hymns their voices were like trumpets, [from **רַע** ra, to sound like a trumpet; see Numbers 10:9; 2 Chronicles 13:12,] and Shimathim,

שמעתים, because in hearing, they lifted up their faces, i.e. in prayer, [from שמע shama, he heard, hearkened,] and Suchathim, שוכתים, because they were overshadowed with the spirit of prophecy, [from שך sach, a tabernacle, or extended covering.]” For farther particulars, see at the end of this chapter. {1 Chronicles 4:43}

**Verse 12. *These are the men of Rechah.*** “These are the men of the great Sanhedrin.” -T.

**Verse 15. *Caleb the son of Jephunneh*** We have already met with this eminent person in Numbers 13:6, 30; 14:24, and elsewhere; and seen his courageous piety and inflexible integrity. The Targum says here, “They called him Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, because he had purged his soul from the counsel of the spies.”

**Verse 18. *And his wife Jehudijah*** The Targum considers the names in this verse as epithets of Moses: “And his wife Jehuditha educated Moses after she had drawn him out of the water: and she called his name Jered, because he caused the manna to descend upon Israel; and Prince Gedor, because he restored the desolations of Israel; Heber also, because he joined Israel to their heavenly Father; and Prince Socho, because he overshadowed Israel with his righteousness, and Jekuthiel, because the Israelites waited on the God of heaven in his time, forty years in the desert; and prince Zanoah, because God, on his account, had passed by the sins of Israel. These names Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, called him by the spirit of prophecy, for she became a proselyte; and Mered took her to himself to wife: he is Caleb, and was so called because he opposed the counsel of the spies.” -T. A similar explanation is given by Jarchi.

**Verse 21. *That wrought fine linen*** “Of the family of those who worked in fine flax to make garments for kings and priests.” -T.

**Verse 22. *And Joash, and Saraph*** “And the prophets and scribes which sprang from the seed of Joshua, and the Gibeonites, whose office it was to serve in the house of the sanctuary, because they had lied to the princes of Israel; also Joash, who is the same as Mahlon; and Saraph, who is the same as Chilion, who took wives of the daughters of Moab and Boaz, the chief of the wise men of the college of Bethlehem, and of those who existed in former days.” -T.



**Verse 23. *These were the potters*** “These are the disciples of the law, for whose sake the world was created; who preside in judgment, and establish the world; and they build and perfect the fallen down house of Israel: they dwelt there with the Shechinah of the King of the world, in the study of the law and the intercalation or months, and determining the commencement of years and festivals: and they computed the times from heaven in the days of Ruth, the mother of kingdoms, to the days of Solomon the king.” -T. I am afraid this paraphrase gives us as little light as the text itself, which speaks of potters, and those who dwelt among plants and hedges. They were probably brickmakers; perhaps potters also, who had their dwelling in low grounds, and fabricated the clay into pots and bricks that was dug up in forming fences in the king’s domains.

**Verse 24. *The sons of Simeon*** This genealogy is very different from that given in Genesis 46:10, and Numbers 26:12. This may be occasioned by the same person having several names, one list taking one name, another list some other, and so on: to reconcile is impossible; to attempt it, useless.

**Verse 27. *Neither did all their family multiply*** In Numbers 1:23 the number of all the families of Simeon was fifty-nine thousand three hundred; and that of Judah was, Numbers 1:27, not less than seventy-four thousand six hundred. When the next census was made, Num. 26, the tribe of Judah amounted to seventy-six thousand five hundred, an increase of one thousand nine hundred; while the tribe of Simeon amounted only to twenty-two thousand two hundred, a decrease of thirty-seven thousand one hundred. It was at that time the smallest tribe in Israel.

**Verse 31. *These were their cities unto the reign of David.*** It appears that David took some of the cities of the Simeonites, and added them to Judah; Ziklag for instance, 1 Samuel 27:6.

As the tribe of Simeon had withdrawn their allegiance from the house of David, the kings of Judah extended their domination as far as possible into the territories of that tribe, so that they were obliged to seek pasture for their flocks at Gedor, and in the mountains of Seir, as we find 1 Chronicles 4:39-42.

**Verse 40.** *They of Ham had dwelt there of old.* These were probably either Philistines or Egyptians, who dwelt at Gedor, which was situated in the environs of Joppa and Samnia.

Those whom the five hundred Simeonites expelled from Seir were Amalekites, 1 Chronicles 4:43.

**Verse 43.** *They smote the rest of the Amalekites* Those who had escaped in the war which Saul made against them, (see 1 Samuel 14:48,) and from David, who had attacked them afterwards, 2 Samuel 8:12.

THE expedition of the Simeonites mentioned here, against Gedor and Seir, was in the days of Hezekiah; and, as Calmet conjectures, near about the time of the captivity of the ten tribes, when the remnant of Simeon would feel themselves obliged to retire more southward, into Arabia Petraea, for fear of the Jews. These may be probable conjectures. — See Calmet.

There are several things in the account of Jabez that are very instructive:—

1. He appears to have been a child brought into the world with great difficulty, at the risk of his own life and that of his mother. So much seems to be implied in, she bare him with sorrow, i.e., with peculiar sorrow and danger.
2. To perpetuate the merciful interposition of God in her own and her son's behalf, she gave him a name that must have recalled to her and his remembrance the danger to which both their lives were exposed, and from which they could not have been extricated but by the especial help of God. She called his name Jabez, etc.
3. He was brought up in the fear of God; he was no idolater; he worshipped the God of Israel, and he showed the sincerity of his faith by frequent and earnest prayer.
4. His prayer was at once both enlightened and pious. He had piety towards God, and therefore he trusted in him: he knew that he was the fountain of all good, and therefore he sought all necessaries both for body and soul from him. He prayed to the God of Israel.
5. Both the matter and manner of his prayer were excellent. His heart was deeply impressed with its wants, and therefore he was earnest and fervent;

O that thou wouldest bless me indeed; **אִם בְּרַךְ תְּבָרַכְנִי** im barech tebarecheni; “O that in blessing thou wouldest bless me!” Let me live under thy benediction! Do thou diligently and frequently bless me!

6. He prays for the things necessary for the body as well as for the soul: And enlarge my coasts—grant me as much territory as may support my family. Let the means of living be adequate to the demands of life; let me have the necessaries, conveniences, and, as far as they may be safely intrusted with me, the comforts of life! O that thou wouldest enlarge my coasts!

7. He is conscious that without the continual support of God he must fail; and therefore he prays to be upheld by his power: That thy hand might be with me! May I ever walk with thee, and ever feel the hand of thy power to support and cover me in all the trials, dangers, and difficulties of life; and the hand of thy providence to supply all my wants in reference to both worlds!

8. He dreads both sin and suffering, and therefore prays against both: O that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! Sin and misery are in every step of the journey of life; keep me from sin, that I grieve thee not; and keep me from sin, that I render not myself miserable! We can never offend God without injuring ourselves; he that sins must suffer. Thorns and scorpions are everywhere in the way to perdition; and he that walks in it must be torn and stung. He alone is happy who walks in the ways of God. Keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.

9. Prayers that have a right aim will have a right answer; Jabez did not pray in vain, for God granted him that which he requested. He was continually blessed; his family was increased; the hand of God was upon him for good. He was saved from sin, and saved from the pangs and sufferings of a guilty conscience.

10. If we take up the character and conduct of Jabez in the view given by the Chaldee, we shall not only see him as a pious and careful man, deeply interested in behalf of himself and his family, but we shall see him as a benevolent man, laboring for the welfare of others, and especially for the religious instruction of youth. He founded schools, in which the young and rising generation were taught useful knowledge, and especially the

knowledge of God. He had disciples, which were divided into three classes, who distinguished themselves by their fervor in the worship of God, by their docility in obediently hearing and treasuring up the advices and instructions of their teachers, and by their deep piety to God in bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. The spirit of prophecy, that is, of prayer and supplication, rested upon them.

11. He did not do these things merely as a duty he owed to God and his fellows, but from the abundance of a generous and loving heart: In his counsel he erected a school of disciples. God had blessed him with temporal things, and he secures their continuance by devoting them to his service; he honors God with his substance, and God honors him with his especial blessing and approbation.

12. On these accounts he was more honorable than his brethren. He was of the same stock and the same lineage; he had neither nobility of birth, nor was distinguished by earthly titles; in all these respects he was on a level with his brethren: but God tells us that he was more honorable than them all; and why? because he prayed, because he served his Maker, and because he lived to do good among men; therefore he received the honor that cometh from God. Reader, imitate the conduct of this worthy Israelite, that thou mayest be a partaker of his blessings.

The things added by the Targumist might have been derived from authentic tradition.

## CHAPTER 5

*The genealogies of Reuben, 1-10. Of Gad, 11-17. The exploits of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 18-22. The genealogy of the half tribe of Manasseh, 23, 24. The idolatry of these tribes and their captivity by the Assyrians, 25, 26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *The sons of Reuben the first-born*** As Reuben was the eldest son of Jacob, why was not his genealogy reviewed first? This verse answers the question; he lost the birth-right because of the transgression mentioned Genesis 35:22; 49:4, and the precedency was given to Judah; from him therefore came the chief ruler. This appears to be the meaning of the place.

**Verse 2. *And of him came the chief ruler*** This is, by both the Syriac and Arabic, understood of Christ: "From Judah the King Messiah shall proceed." The Chaldee paraphrases the verse thus: "Seeing Judah prevailed over his brethren, so the kingdom was taken from Reuben and given to Judah; and because he was strong, so was his kingdom. Levi also was godly, and did not transgress in the matter of the golden calf; therefore the high priesthood was taken away from the children of Reuben, and on their account from all the first-born, and given to Aaron and his sons. The custody of the sanctuary belonged to the Levites, but the birthright to Joseph." -T.

**Verse 6. *Beerah his son*** After their separation from the house of David the ten tribes continued to have princes of the tribes; and this continued till the time that Tiglath-pileser carried them captives into Assyria. At that time Beerah was their prince or chief; and with him this species of dominion or precedency terminated. According to the Targum, Beerah was the same as Baruch the prophet.

**Verse 8. *Who dwelt in Aroer*** This town was situated on the river Arnon; and Nebo was both a city and a mountain in the same country. They both lay on the other side of Jordan.

**Verse 10. *And they dwelt in their tents*** The Hagarites were tribes of Nomade, or Scenite, Arabs; people who lived in tents, without any fixed dwellings, and whose property consisted in cattle. The descendants of Reuben extirpated these Hagarites, seized on their property and their tents, and dwelt in their place.

**Verse 12. *Joel the chief*** “Joel, prince of the Sanhedrin; and Shapham, master of the college; and Jaanai and Shaphat, judges in Mathnan.” -T.

**Verse 13. *And their brethren*** This verse is wanting both in the Syriac and in the Arabic.

**Verse 16. *The suburbs of Sharon*** There were three places of this name: that mentioned here was a district in the country of Bashan beyond Jordan, (see Joshua 12:18;) there was another that lay between Caesarea of Palestine and Joppa; and there was a third between Mount Tabor and the Sea of Tiberias. See Calmet.

**Verse 19. *They made war with the Hagarites*** This is probably the same war that is mentioned 1 Chronicles 5:10. Those called Hagarites in the text are everywhere denominated by the Targum **הונגראי** Hongaraai, Hongarites.

**Verse 20. *They put their trust in him***. Or, as the Targum says, “Because they trusted **במימריה** bemeymriah, in his WORD.”

**Verse 21. *They took away their cattle*** This was a war of extermination as to the political state of the people, which nothing could justify but an especial direction of God; and this he could never give against any, unless the cup of their iniquity had been full. The Hagarites were full of idolatry: see 1 Chronicles 5:25.

**Verse 22. *For there fell down many slain*** The hundred thousand men mentioned above were probably made slaves, and were not slain. The Targum says, one hundred thousand souls of men.

***The war was of God***. The Targum says, the war was **מימרא דיי** min meymera dayai, “from the WORD of the Lord.”

**Verse 25. *The gods of the people of the land*** We see the reason why God delivered the Hagarites into the hands of these tribes; they were abominable idolaters, and therefore God destroyed them.

**Verse 26. *Tilgath-pilneser*** Many MSS. have תגלת Tiglath instead of תלגת Tilgath. The Syriac, the Septuagint, and the Chaldee, have the same reading as in 2 Kings 15:29, etc.

***Brought them unto Halah*** See the notes on the parallel places marked in the margin, for many particulars of these wars, and consequent captivity. It is a pity that some method were not found out to harmonize the books of Kings with the books of Chronicles, that the variations might be seen at one view.

## CHAPTER 6

*The genealogy of Levi and Aaron, 1-30. The offices of the priests and Levites, 31-53. The cities assigned them, 54-81.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1. *The sons of Levi*** It has been well remarked that the genealogy of Levi is given here more ample and correct than that of any of the others. And this is perhaps an additional proof that the author was a priest, felt much for the priesthood, and took care to give the genealogy of the Levitical and sacerdotal families, from the most correct tables; for with such tables we may presume he was intimately acquainted.

**Verse 4. *Eleazar begat Phinehas*** As the high priesthood continued in this family for a long time, the sacred historian confines himself to this chiefly, omitting Nadab and Abihu, and even the family of Ithamar.

**Verse 8. *Ahitub begat Zadok*** Through this person the high priesthood came again into the family of Eleazar.

**Verse 10. *Johanan*** Supposed to be the same as Jehoiada.

***Executed the priest's office*** Probably this refers to the dignified manner in which Azariah opposed King Uzziah, who wished to invade the priest's office, and offer incense in the temple. See 2 Chronicles 26:17, 18.

**Verse 14. *Seraiah*** He was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings 25:18, 21.

**Verse 22. *Korah*** See the history of this man, and his rebellion, Numbers 16:1-33.

**Verse 28. *The first-born Vashni, and Abiah*** . There is a great mistake in this verse: in 1 Samuel 8:2 we read, Now the name of his (Samuel's) first-born was Joel; and the name of his second Abiah. The word **יואל** Joel is lost out of the text in this place, and **ושני** vesheni, which signifies



the second, and which refers to Abiah, is made here into a proper name. The Septuagint, Vulgate, and Chaldee, copy this blunder; but the Syriac and Arabic read as in 1 Samuel 8:2. The MSS. have all copied the corrupted Hebrew in this place. Jarchi labors to restore the true reading, and yet preserve the integrity of the text, by paraphrasing thus: “And the second, (ושני vesheni,) in respect of the first, he was Abiah; and the second, in respect of Abiah, he was Joel.”

These, Joel and Abiah, were the two sons of Samuel, who administered justice so badly that the people, being oppressed, began to murmur, and demanded a king. See 1 Samuel 8:1, etc.

**Verse 31. *After that the ark had rest.*** The Targum says, “These are they whom David set over the service of the singing, in the house of the sanctuary, or tabernacle of the Lord, at the time in which the ark was brought into it;” that is, when it was brought from the house of Obed-edom.

**Verse 32. *According to their order.*** This order is specified below.

**Verse 39. *Asaph*** This person, with Heman, the sons of Kora, Ethan, Jeduthun, etc., are celebrated in these books, and in the Psalms, for their skill in singing, and the part they performed in the public worship of God.

It is very likely that their singing was only a kind of recitative or chanting, such as we still find in the synagogues. It does not appear that God had especially appointed these singers, much less any musical instruments, (the silver trumpets excepted,) to be employed in his service. Musical instruments in the house of God are, at least under the Gospel, repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, and tend not a little to corrupt the worship of God. Those who are fond of music in the theater are fond of it in the house of God when they go thither; and some, professing Christianity, set up such a spurious worship in order to draw people to hear the Gospel! This is doing evil that good may come of it; and by this means, light and trifling people are introduced into the Church of Christ, and when in, are generally very troublesome, hard to be pleased, and difficult to be saved.

**Verse 50. *These are the sons of Aaron*** We have already had a list of these, (see 1 Chronicles 6:3-16;) this is a second, but less extensive, and is

a proof that the writer of this book had several lists before him, from which he borrowed as he judged proper.

**Verse 54. *Theirs was the lot.*** All the tribes and families obtained their respective inheritances by lot, but to the sons of Aaron was the first lot; and so the Syriac and Arabic have understood this place. The first lot, says Jarchi, fell to Judah, that they might give to the priests and the Levites the cities marked below. See an account of the possessions of the priests and Levites, Josh. 20, 21.

**Verse 60. *All their cities-were thirteen*** But there are only eleven reckoned here, Gibeon and Juttah being omitted, and the names of some of the others changed. None of the versions give the full number of names, although they all give the whole sum thirteen.

**Verse 65. *Which are called by their names.*** Probably each family gave its own name to the city that fell to its lot.

**Verse 69. *Aijalon with her suburbs*** There are the two cities wanting here, Eltekeh and Gibethon. See Joshua 21:23.

**Verse 71. — 77.** We shall see from Joshua 21:28, etc., that several of these cities have different names.

How barren to us is this register, both of incident and interest! and yet, as barren rocks and sandy deserts make integral and necessary parts of the globe; so do these genealogical tables make necessary parts of the history of providence and grace in the maintenance of truth, and the establishment of the Church of Christ. Therefore no one that fears God will either despise or lightly esteem them.

**Verse 72.** See “1 Chronicles 6:71”.

**Verse 73.** See “1 Chronicles 6:71”.

**Verse 74.** See “1 Chronicles 6:71”.

**Verse 75.** See “1 Chronicles 6:71”.

**Verse 76.** See “1 Chronicles 6:71”.

**Verse 77.** See “1 Chronicles 6:71”.



## CHAPTER 7

*The genealogy of Issachar, 1-5. Of Benjamin, 6-12. Of Naphtali, 13. Of Manasseh, 14-19. Of Ephraim, 20-29. And of Asher, 30-40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 2. *Whose number was in the days of David*** Whether this was the number returned by Joab and his assistants, when they made that census of the people with which God was so much displeased, we know not. It is worthy of remark that we read here the sum of three tribes, Benjamin, Issachar, and Asher, under the reign of David, which is mentioned nowhere else; and yet we have no account here of the other tribes, probably because the author found no public registers in which such enumeration was recorded.

**Verse 3. *The sons of Izrahiah-five*** There are, however, only four names in the text. Instead of five, the Syriac and Arabic read four. If five be the true reading, then Izrahiah must be reckoned with his four sons.

**Verse 6. *The sons of Benjamin; Bela, and Becher and Jediael*** In Genesis 46:21, ten sons of Benjamin are reckoned; viz., Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Eri, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. In Numbers 26:38, etc., five sons only of Benjamin are mentioned, Bela, Ashbel, Ahiram, Shupham, and Hupham: and Ard and Naaman are there said to be the sons of Bela; consequently grandsons of Benjamin. In the beginning of the following chapter, five sons of Benjamin are mentioned, viz., Bela, Ashbel, Aharah, Nohah, and Rapha; where also Addar, Gera, Abihud, Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, a second Gera, Shephuphan, and Hiram, are all represented as grandsons, not sons, of Benjamin: hence we see that in many cases grandsons are called sons, and both are often confounded in the genealogical tables. To attempt to reconcile such discrepancies would be a task as endless as it would be useless. The rabbins say that Ezra, who wrote this book, did not know whether some of these were sons or grandsons; and they intimate also that the tables

from which he copied were often defective, and here we must leave all such matters.

**Verse 21. *Whom the men of Gath-slew*** We know nothing of this circumstance but what is related here. The Targum paraphrases the whole thus: “These were the leaders of the house of Ephraim; and they computed their period [or boundary, כִּצְאֵה kitsa] from the time in which the Word of the Lord of the universe spake with Abraham between the divisions, [i.e., the separated parts of the covenant sacrifice; see Genesis 15:9-21,] but they erred, for they should have counted from the time in which Isaac was born; they went out of Egypt therefore thirty years before the period: for, thirty years before the birth of Isaac the Word of the Lord of the universe spake with Abraham between the divisions. And when they went out of Egypt, there were with them two hundred thousand warriors of the tribe of Ephraim, whom the men of Gath, the natives of the land of the Philistines, slew, because they came down that they might carry away

## CHAPTER 8

*The genealogy of Benjamin down to Saul, 1-32. The children and descendants of Saul, 33-40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1.** *Now Benjamin begat, etc.* See what has been said on the preceding chapter, 1 Chronicles 7:6.

**Verse 9.** *He begat of Hodesh his wife* In the preceding verse it is said that Hushim and Baara were his wives; and here it is said he begat of Hodesh his wife, etc. And then his children by Hushim are mentioned, but not a word of Baara! It is likely therefore that Hodesh was another name for Baara, and this is asserted by the Targum: And he begot of Baara, that is Chodesh, his wife; so called because he espoused her anew. It is supposed that he had put her away before, and now remarried her.

**Verse 12.** *Who built Ono, and Lod* The Targum adds, "Which the children of Israel ravaged and burnt with fire, when they made war on the tribe of Benjamin in Gibeah."

**Verse 28.** *These were heads of the fathers* On the following verses Dr. Kennicott has labored hard to restore the true reading. See his detailed comparison of these and their parallel passages in his Hebrew Bible, vol. ii., p. 667.

**Verse 29.** *And at Gibeon* This passage to the end of the 38th verse is found with a little variety in the names, 1 Chronicles 9:35-44.

The rabbins say that Ezra, having found two books that had these passages with a variety in the names, as they agreed in general, he thought best to insert them both, not being able to discern which was the best.

His general plan was to collate all the copies he had, and to follow the greater number when he found them to agree; those which disagreed from

the majority were thrown aside as spurious; and yet, in many cases, probably the rejected copies contained the true text.

If Ezra proceeded as R. Sol. Jarchi says, he had a very imperfect notion of the rules of true criticism; and it is no wonder that he has left so many faults in his text.

**Verse 34. *Merib-baal*** The same as Mephibosheth, for, as the Israelites detested Baal, which signifies lord, they changed it into bosheth, which signifies shame or reproach.

**Verse 40. *The sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor*** The Targum speaks honourably of them: "The sons of Ulam were mighty and strong men, subduing by wisdom their evil concupiscence, as men bend a bow; therefore they had many sons and grandsons."

Of the six sons of Azel, mentioned 1 Chronicles 8:38, R. S. Jarchi says that their allegorical expositions were sufficient to load thirteen thousand camels! No doubt these were reputed to be deeply learned men. There was a time when the allegorizers and metaphor-men ranked very high among theologians, even in our own enlightened and critical country. At present they are almost totally out of fashion. May they never recover their footing! But what a shameful hyperbole is that of Jarchi! The writings of six men a load for thirteen thousand camels!

## CHAPTER 9

*All Israel reckoned by genealogies, 1. The first inhabitants of Jerusalem, after their return from their captivity, who were chiefs of the fathers, 2-9. Of the priests, 10-13; Levites, 14-16; porters, their work, lodgings, etc., 17-29; other officers, 30-32; the singers, 33, 34. A repetition of the genealogy of Saul and his sons, 35-44.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. *Were reckoned by genealogies*** Jarchi considers these as the words of Ezra, the compiler of the book; as if he had said: I have given the genealogies of the Israelites as I have found them in a book which was carried into Babylon, when the people were carried thither for their transgressions; and this book which I found is that which I have transcribed in the preceding chapters.

**Verse 2. *Now the first inhabitants*** This is spoken of those who returned from the Babylonish captivity, and of the time in which they returned; for it is insinuated here that other persons afterwards settled at Jerusalem, though these mentioned here were the first on the return from the captivity. Properly speaking, the divisions mentioned in this verse constituted the whole of the Israelitish people, who were, ever since the days of Joshua, divided into the four following classes: 1. The priests. 2. The Levites. 3. The common people, or simple Israelites. 4. The Nethinim, or slaves of the temple, the remains of the Gibeonites, who, having deceived Joshua, were condemned to this service Joshua 9:21, etc. In David's time it is probable that other conquered people were added, as the successors of the Gibeonites were not sufficient to perform all the drudgery of the temple service.

**Verse 3. *And in Jerusalem dwelt*** Several of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, took advantage of the proclamation of Cyrus to return to Jerusalem, and so mingled with the Israelites, and those



to whom Jerusalem had previously appertained; and this was necessary in order to provide a sufficient population for so large a city.

**Verse 4. *Uthai the son of Ammihud*** The list here is nearly the same with those found in Ezra and Nehemiah, and contains those who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel; but the list in Nehemiah is more ample, probably because it contains those who came afterwards. The object of the sacred writer here was to give the list of those who came first. Now the first inhabitants, etc.

**Verse 11. *The ruler of the house of God.*** The high priest at this time was Jeshua the son of Jozadak, (Ezra 3:8,) and Seraiah, (Nehemiah 11:11,) called here Azariah, was the ruler of the house; the person next in authority to the high priest, and who probably had the guard of the temple and command of the priests, Levites, etc. It is likely that the person here was the same as is called the second priest, 2 Kings 25:18, who was the sagan or high priest's deputy. See the note there.

**Verse 13. *And their brethren*** What a prodigious number of ecclesiastics to perform the Divine service of one temple! no less than one thousand seven hundred and eighty able-bodied men! and this number is reckoned independently of the two hundred and twelve porters who served at the gates of the house of the Lord, 1 Chronicles 9:22.

**Verse 18. *The king's gate*** That by which the kings of Judah went to the temple; see on 2 Kings 16:18.

**Verse 19. *Keepers of the entry.*** Whose business it was to suffer no person to come to the tabernacle but the priests, during the performance of the sacred service; see Jarchi.

**Verse 20. *And Phinehas*** The Targum says, "And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was ruler over them from ancient times, from the day in which the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness; and the WORD of the Lord was his assistant."

**Verse 30. *The sons of the priests made the ointment*** Only the priests were permitted to make this ointment; all others were forbidden to do it on pain of death; see Exodus 30:34-38, and the notes there.

**Verse 35. *Whose wife's name was Maachah*** Here our translators have departed from the original, for the word is אַחֹתוֹ achotho, his SISTER; but the Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Chaldee, have WIFE; to which may be added 1 Chronicles 8:29, the parallel place. Almost all the early editions, as well as the MS. editions, have the same reading. Of all the Polyglots the Complutensian alone has אִשְׁתּוֹ ishto, his WIFE. His wife is the reading also of Vatablus's Polyglot, but in the margin he observes that other copies have his sister. There is most certainly a fault somewhere, for Maachah could not be both the sister and wife of Jehiel. Whether, therefore, 1 Chronicles 8:29 has been altered from this, or this altered from that, who can tell? A single letter makes the whole difference: if the word be written with ח cheth, it is SISTER; if with ש shin, it is WIFE. The latter is most probably the true reading. It is so in three very ancient MSS. in my own possession.

**Verse 41. *And Ahaz.*** This is added by our translators from 1 Chronicles 8:35, but such liberties should only be taken in a note; for although the words are now sufficiently distinguished from the text by being printed in Italics, yet it is too much to expect that every editor of a Bible will attend to such distinctions, and in process of time the words will be found incorporated with the text.

**Verse. 35,** and the following verses, are a repetition of what we find in 1 Chronicles 8:29-38. where see the notes.

## CHAPTER 10

*A fatal battle between the Israelites and Philistines in Gilboa, in which Saul is mortally wounded, and has three sons slain, 1-6. The Israelites being totally routed, the Philistines, coming to strip the dead, find Saul and has three sons among the slain; they cut off Saul's head, and send it and his armor about the country to the idol temples; and then fix them up in the house of Dagon, 7-10. The men of Jabesh-gilead come by night, and take away the bodies of Saul and his three sons, and bury them in Jabesh, 11, 12. The reason of Saul's tragical death; the kingdom is transferred to David, 13, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1.** *Now the Philistines fought against Israel* The reader will find the same history in almost the same words, in 1 Samuel 31:1-13, to the notes on which he is referred for every thing important in this.

**Verse 6.** *So Saul died-and all his house* Every branch of his family that had followed him to the war was cut off; his three sons are mentioned as being the chief. No doubt all his officers were slain.

**Verse 11.** *When all Jabesh-gilead heard* For a general account of the principles of heroism and gratitude from which this action of the men of Jabesh-gilead proceeded, see the note on 1 Samuel 31:11, 12.

By the kindness of a literary friend, I am enabled to lay a farther illustration of this noble act before the reader, which he will find at the conclusion of the chapter. {1 Chronicles 10:14}

**Verse 13.** *Saul died for his transgression* See the concluding observations on the first book of Samuel. {1 Samuel 31:13}

**Verse 14.** *Inquired not of the Lord* On these two last verses the Targum speaks thus: "And Saul died for the transgression by which he transgressed against the WORD of the Lord, and because he did not keep

the commandment of the Lord when he warred against the house of Amalek; and because he consulted Pythons, and sought oracular answers from them. Neither did he ask counsel from before the Lord by Urim and Thummim, for he had slain the priests that were in Nob; therefore the Lord slew him, and transferred the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.”

A LITERARY friend furnishes the following remarks:—

“The sacred writer, in the first book of Samuel, 1 Samuel 31:11-13, and 1 Chronicles 10:11, 12, after relating the defeat and death of Saul, and the ignominious treatment of his remains, thus concludes:—

“And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there; and they took the bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.’

“Often has this account been read with admiration of the bravery and devotedness of the men of Jabesh-gilead, but without considering that these men had any greater cause than others for honoring the remains of their sovereign; but, on reflection, it will be perceived that the strong impulse of gratitude prompted them to this honorable exertion. They remembered their preservation from destruction, and, which to brave men is more galling, from bearing marks of having been defeated, and being deprived of the honorable hope of wiping off disgrace, or defending their country at future seasons.

“Reading these verses in conjunction with the attack of Nahash, we perceive the natural feelings of humanity, of honorable respect, prompting the men of Jabesh to act as they did in rescuing the bones of Saul and his family.

“The father of Grecian poetry relates in how great a degree the warriors of ancient days honored the remains of their leaders; how severe were the contests for the body of the fallen chief, more determined oftentimes than the struggle for victory: this point of military honor was possibly excited or heightened by the religious idea so prevalent in his age, and after times, respecting the fate of the spirits of those who were unburied.

“Homer wrote of events passing at no distant period from those recorded in the first volume of Samuel; and these accounts mutually corroborate each other, being in unison, not only with the feelings of humanity, but with the customs of ancient nations. These may be farther illustrated by comparing the conduct of the Philistines with regard to Saul and his sons, with that of the hero of the Iliad towards Hector, the most finished character of the poem. Saul had been a severe scourge to the Philistines throughout a long series of years; the illustrious chief of Troy had long warded off the ruin of his country, and destroyed the flower of her foes, independently of his last victory over Patroclus, which drew on his remains that dishonor which, however, fell only on his destroyer.

“Should the siege of Troy be considered a fable, it may then be concluded that Homer introduced into his poems the customs and manners known to those for whose perusal he wrote, if these customs were not prevalent among his readers; but anxiety for the body of the illustrious dead, or regret for his death, has often caused success when all exertions prior to this powerful stimulus have not availed; and this even in our days.

“The Philistines had long been confined to the southwest angle of the promised land, and in the earlier part of Saul’s reign had suffered many and severe losses; yet it appears by this chapter that, alone or in conjunction with allies, they had been able to penetrate nearly to the banks of the Jordan, to fight the battle on Mount Gilboa. This could only have been effected by a march through great part of the kingdom of Israel.

“Doubtless the attention of Saul in its defense might have been greatly distracted by his pursuit and fear of David, which appeared to have absorbed his whole mind; and it may account for the defenceless or weakened state of his forces.

“These circumstances appear to corroborate the authenticity of these books, independently of the many private transactions therein recorded; particularly the interesting and singular friendship of Jonathan and David, a transaction not likely to occur to a forger of a narrative. J.W.”

## CHAPTER 11

*David is anointed king in Hebron, 1-3. He wars against the Jebusites, and takes their city, 4-9. An account of David's three mightiest heroes; and particularly of their hazardous exploit in bringing water from the well of Beth-lehem, 10-19. A list of the rest, and an account of their acts, 20-47.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1.** *Then all Israel gathered themselves to David* See 2 Samuel 5:1-10, for the history contained in the first nine verses of this chapter, and the notes there.

**Verse 11.** *The number of the mighty men* See 2 Samuel 23:8, etc., and the notes there. The Targum has a remarkable addition here.

“These are the numbers of the strong men who were with David; he was the potent chief of the army; he sat upon the throne of judgment, anointed with the holy oil, all the prophets and wise men standing about him. When he went to battle, he was assisted from on high; and when he sat down to teach the law, the true meaning arose up in his mind. He was elect and pleasant, of a beautiful mien and lovely countenance, exercised in wisdom, prudent in counsel, and strong in virtue; the prince of the assembly, of a melodious voice, master in hymns, and chief among the mighty. He was instructed in the use of martial weapons; he carried a spear, to which was appended the ensign of the host of Judah; he went forth according to the voice of the Holy Spirit, was victorious in battle, and overthrew with his spear three hundred men at one time.” -T.

On this and some of the following verses there is a judicious note of Dr. Kennicott, which I shall take the liberty to introduce, referring to his first Dissertation on the Hebrew text for farther illustration and proof, p. 128-144.

“Among the parallel places, a comparison of which may be of very considerable service, scarce any passages will appear more effectually to correct each other than the catalogue of David’s mighty men of valor, as it now stands in 2 Samuel 23:8-40, and in this chapter. About thirty-four Hebrew words have been lost out of this part of the passage in Chronicles, which are happily preserved in Samuel.

“The chief point of proof is this, that the catalogue divides these thirty-seven warriors into the captain-general, a first three, a second three, and the remaining thirty; and yet that the third captain of the first ternary is now here omitted. The following juxtaposition will show the whole deficiency, and properly supply it. But let it be observed that Jashobeam, the first captain of the first ternary, had been already mentioned, and that the history is here speaking of the second captain, namely, Eleazar.

2 Samuel 23:9: And after him was Eleazar the son  
1 Chronicles 11:12: And after him was Eleazar the son

S. of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty

C. of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighties.

S. men with David when they defied

C. 13. He was with David at Pas-dammim, and there

S. the Philistines that were there gathered together to

C. the Philistines were gathered together to

S. battle, and the men of Israel were gone away.

C. battle,

S. 10. He arose and smote the Philistines until his

C.

S. hand was weary and his hand clave unto the

C.

S. sword; and the Lord wrought a great victory

C.

S. that day: and the people returned after him only

C.

S. to spoil. 11. And after him was SHAMMAH. The  
C.

S. son of Agee, the Hararite: and the Philistines  
C.

S. were gathered together into a troop, where was  
C. where was

S. a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people  
C. a parcel of ground full of barley, and the people

S. fled from the Philistines. 12. But he  
C. fled from before the Philistines. 14. And they set

S. stood in the midst of the ground and defended  
C. themselves, in the midst of that parcel, and delivered

S. it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord  
C. it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord

S. wrought a great victory.  
C. saved than by a great deliverance.

**Verse 17. *David longed*** See the notes on 2 Samuel 23:15-17.

**Verse 22. *Benaiah-slew two lion-like men of Moab*** The Targum says, "Benaiah was a valiant man, fearing sin, and of a righteous conduct in Kabzeel; he slew two of the nobles of Moab, who were like two strong lions. He was a great and righteous man as any in the second sanctuary. On a certain day, having struck his foot against a dead tortoise, he went down to Shiloh, and having broken pieces of ice, he washed himself with them, and afterward went up, and read the book of the law of the priests, in which much is contained, in a short winter's day, viz., the tenth of the month Tebeth."

**Verse 23. *Plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.*** See the note on 2 Samuel 23:21.

**Verse 25. *David set him over his guard*** "Made him chief ruler over his disciples." -T.



FOR other particulars, see the notes on the parallel places, where the subject is farther considered.

## CHAPTER 12

*The different persons, captains, etc., who joined themselves to David at Ziklag, 1-22. Those who joined him at Hebron, out of the different tribes; Judah, Simeon, Levi, the house of Aaron, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Dan, Asher, Reuben, etc., to the amount of a hundred and twenty thousand, 23-37. Their unanimity, and the provisions they brought for his support, 38-40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1. *Came to David to Ziklag*** Achish, king of Gath, had given Ziklag to David, as a safe retreat from the wrath of Saul.

**Verse 8. *And were as swift as the roes*** That swiftness was considered to be a grand accomplishment in a warrior, appears from all ancient writings which treat of military affairs.

**Verse 15. *In the first month*** Perhaps this was the month Nisan, which answers to a part of our March and April. This was probably before the snows on the mountains were melted, just as Jordan began to overflow its banks; or if we allow that it had already overflowed its banks, it made their attempt more hazardous, and afforded additional proof of their heroism.

**Verse 18. *The spirit came upon Amasai*** “The spirit of fortitude clothed Amasai, the chief of the mighty men; and he answered, For thy sake, O David, are we come, that we may be with thee, thou son of Jesse. Prosperity be to thee by night and by day; and prosperity be to thy helpers; for the Word of the Lord is thy assistant.” -T.

**Verse 22. *Like the host of God.*** “That is, a very numerous army; like the army of the angel of God.” -T.

**Verse 23. *And came to David to Hebron*** That is, after the death of Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son. See 2 Samuel 4:5.

**Verse 27.**

## CHAPTER 13

*David consults with his officers, and resolves to bring back the ark from the house of Abinadab, 1-4. They place it on a new cart, and Uzza and Ahio drive the cart; the oxen stumbling, Uzza puts forth his hand to save the ark from falling, and he is smitten by the Lord, 5-10. David is displeased, and orders the ark to be carried to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, 11-13. The ark abides there three months, and the Lord blesses Obed-edom, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. *David consulted*** Having taken the strong hold of Zion from the Jebusites, organized his army, got assurances of the friendly disposition of the Israelites towards him, he judged it right to do what he could for the establishment of religion in the land; and as a first step, consulted on the propriety of bringing the ark from an obscure village, where it had remained during the reign of Saul, to the royal city or seat of government.

**Verse 5. *From Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath*** “Therefore David gathered all Israel, from the Nile, **נִלוֹס** Nilos, of Egypt, even to the entrance of Antioch.” -T.

**Verse 6. *Whose name is called on it.*** “Where his name is invoked.” -T. And so the Hebrew, **אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא שֵׁם** asher nikra shem, should be understood, his name was not called on it, but invoked at it.

**Verse 7. *In a new cart*** Lest it should be profaned by being placed on any carriage that had been employed about common uses.

***Uzza and Ahio*** All the versions understand **אָחִיו** achyo as signifying brother or brothers; so does Jarchi, who observes, from 2 Samuel 6:3, that these were the sons of Abinadab.

**Verse 9. *Uzza put forth his hand*** See this transaction explained 2 Samuel 6:6, etc.

**Verse 14. *The Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom*** That this man was only a sojourner at Gath, whence he was termed Gittite, and that he was originally a Levite, is evident from 1 Chronicles 15:17, 18.

The Targum ends this chapter thus: “And the Word of the Lord blessed Obed-edom, and his children, and his grand-children; and his wife conceived, and his eight daughters-in-law: and each brought forth eight at one birth, insomuch that in one day there were found, of fathers and children, fourscore and one; and He blessed and increased greatly all that belonged to him.” This exposition will not be generally received; but all rabbins must be allowed to deal in the marvellous.

For other remarks see on 2 Samuel 6:1, etc.

## CHAPTER 14

*Hiram sends artificers and materials to David, to build him a house, 1, 2. David's wives and children, 3-7. He defeats the Philistines in two battles: one in the valley of Rephaim, 8-12; and the other at Gibeon and Gazer, 13-16. His fame goes out into all the surrounding nations, 17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 1.** *Now Hiram king of Tyre* See the transactions of this chapter related 2 Samuel 5:11-26.

**Verse 4.** *These are the names of his children* In 2 Samuel 5:14-16, eleven persons only are mentioned in the Hebrew text, but the Septuagint has twenty-four, here there are thirteen, and all the versions have the same number, with certain varieties in the names. — See the notes there.

**Verse 8.** *The Philistines went up to seek David* See on 2 Samuel 5:17.

**Verse 10.** *David inquired of God* “David consulted the WORD of the Lord.” -T.

**Verse 11.** *Like the breaking forth of waters* “And David said, The Lord hath broken the enemies of David like to the breaking of a potter’s vessel full of water.” -T.

**Verse 15.** *A sound of going* “When thou shalt hear the sound of the angels coming to thy assistance, then go out to battle; for an angel is sent from the presence of God, that he may render thy way prosperous.” -T.

**Verse 17.** *Into all lands* That is, all the surrounding or neighboring lands and nations, for no others can possibly be intended.

## CHAPTER 15

*David prepares to bring home the ark, and musters the Levites, 1-11. They sanctify themselves, and bear the ark upon their shoulders, 12-15. The solemnities observed on the occasion, 16-26. David dances before the ark, and is despised by his wife Michal, 27-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1. *Made him houses*** One for himself, and one for the ark; in the latter was a tent, under which the ark was placed.

**Verse 2. *None ought to carry the ark-but the Levites*** It was their business; and he should have thought of this sooner, and then the unfortunate breach on Uzza would have been prevented; see 1 Chronicles 15:13.

**Verse 15. *Upon their shoulders*** That is the staves which went through the rings rested on their shoulders, but the ark itself rested on the staves like a sedan on its poles.

**As *Moses commanded*** See Numbers 4:5, 15.

**Verse 17. — *Heman-Asaph-Ethan*** These were the three chief musicians in the time of David; see 1 Chronicles 6:31.

**Verse 20. *With psalteries on Alamoth*** Some suppose that the word signifies virgins, or women singers, the persons mentioned here being appointed to accompany them with psalteries, and preside over them.

The Vulgate says *arcana cantabant*, they sang secret things or mysteries; probably prophetic hymns.

**Verse 21. *On the Sheminith*** According to the Targum, this signifies an instrument that sounded an octave, or, according to others, an instrument with eight strings. The Syriac and Arabic have it, instruments to sing with daily, at the third, sixth, and ninth hour; the Vulgate, an octave, for a song

of victory: some think the eighth band of the musicians is intended, who had the strongest and most sonorous voices; and that it is in this sense that shelomith and lenatstseach should be understood.

**Verse 22. *Chenaniah-he instructed about the song*** This appears to have been the master singer; he gave the key and the time, for he presided **במשא** bemassa, in the elevation, probably meaning what is called pitching the tune, for he was skillful in music, and powerful in his voice, and well qualified to lead the band: he might have been precentor,

**Verse 26. *God helped the Levites*** When they saw that God had made no breach among them, as he had in the case of Uzza, in gratitude for their preservation, and his acceptance of their labor, they sacrificed seven bullocks and seven rams.

**Verse 27. *A robe of flue linen*** A robe made of **בויץ** buts, probably the tuft or beard of the Pinna Magna, a species of muscle found every where on the shores of the Mediterranean, growing sometimes, as I have seen, to a foot and a half in length. I have seen a pair of gloves made of this very rich stuff; the color is a deep dark yellow, something inclining to what is called the lilac. The buts or byssus was not heard of in Israel before the time of David: after that it is frequently mentioned.

**Verse 29. *Michal-saw-David dancing-and she despised him*** See this whole business explained 2 Samuel 6:20, etc., where David's conduct is vindicated, and the nature of Michal's disgrace and punishment hinted at, but all left to the reader's determination.



## CHAPTER 16

*David brings the ark into its tent; and offers sacrifices, peace-offerings, and burnt-offerings, 1, 2; and gives portions to the people of Israel, 3. He appoints proper ministers and officers for the ark, 4-6. He delivers a solemn thanksgiving on the occasion, 7-36. How the different officers served at the ark, 37-42. The people return home, 43.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 2. *He blessed the people*** “He blessed the people in the name of the WORD of the Lord.” -T.

**Verse 3. *To every one a loaf of bread*** A whole cake. A good piece of flesh; “the sixth part of an ox, and the sixth part of a hin of wine.” -T. See 2 Samuel 6:18-20; see Jarchi also.

**Verse 5. *Asaph*** See the preceding chapter, 1 Chronicles 15:17, etc.

**Verse 7. *David delivered first this psalm*** I believe the meaning of this place to be this: David made the psalm on the occasion above specified; and delivered it to Asaph, who was the musician, and to his brethren, to be sung by them in honor of what God had done in behalf of his people.

**Verse 10. *That seek the Lord.*** “That seek the WORD of the Lord.” -T.

**Verse 12. *Remember his marvellous works*** The whole of the psalm refers to God’s wondrous actions among the nations in behalf of Israel.

**Verse 22. *Touch not mine anointed*** By this title the patriarchs are generally understood: they had a regal and sacerdotal power in the order of God. In the behalf of the patriarchs God had often especially interfered: in behalf of Abraham, Genesis 12:17; 20:3; and of Jacob, Genesis 31:24; 34:26; 35:5. But the title may be applied to all the Jewish people, who were the anointed, as they were the elect and peculiar people of God. See on Hebrews 11:26.

**Verse 31. *Let the heavens be glad*** “Let the supreme angels be glad, and the inhabitants of the earth rejoice.” -T. In this place the Targumist uses the Greek word *αγγελου*, angels, in Hebrew letters thus, *אנגלי* angeley.

**Verse 35. *Save us, O God of our salvation*** As he is the saving God, so we may pray to him to save us. To pray to God under the attribute the influence of which we need, serves to inspire much confidence. I am weak; Almighty God, help me! I am ignorant; O thou Father of lights, teach me! I am lost; O merciful God, save me; etc. See the notes on Psa. 96 and 105.

**Verse 39. *Zadok the priest*** Both Zadok and Abiathar were high priests at this time: the former David established at Gibeah, or Gibeon, where the ark had been all the days of Saul; and the latter he established at Jerusalem, where the ark now was: so there were two high priests, and two distinct services; but there was only one ark. How long the service at Gibeon was continued we cannot tell; the principal functions were no doubt performed at Jerusalem.

**Verse 42. *Musical instruments of God.*** Ad canendum Deo, “to sing to God.” -Vulgate. *των ωδων του θεου*, “of the sons of God.” -Septuagint. The Syriac is remarkable: “These were upright men who did not sing unto God with instruments of music, nor with drums, nor with listra, nor with straight nor crooked pipes, nor with cymbals; but they sang before the Lord Almighty with a joyous mouth, and with a pure and holy prayer, and with innocence and integrity.” The Arabic is nearly the same. None of the versions understand the words *כלי שיר האלהים* keley shir haelohim as implying instruments of music of God, but instruments employed in the song of God, or to praise God; as also the Targum. Query, Did God ever ordain instruments of music to be used in his worship? Can they be used in Christian assemblies according to the spirit of Christianity? Has Jesus Christ, or his apostles, ever commanded or sanctioned the use of them? Were they ever used any where in the apostolic Church? Does the use of them at present, in Christian congregations, ever increase the spirit of devotion? Does it ever appear that bands of musicians, either in their collective or individual capacity, are more spiritual, or as spiritual, as the other parts of the Church of Christ? Is there less pride, self-will, stubbornness, insubordination, lightness, and frivolity, among such persons, than among the other professors of Christianity found in the

same religious society? Is it ever remarked or known that musicians in the house of God have attained to any depth of piety, or superior soundness of understanding, in the things of God? Is it ever found that those Churches and Christian societies which have and use instruments of music in Divine worship are more holy, or as holy, as those societies which do not use them? And is it always found that the ministers which affect and recommend them to be used in the worship of Almighty God, are the most spiritual men, and the most spiritual and useful preachers? Can mere sounds, no matter how melodious, where no word nor sentiment is or can be uttered, be considered as giving praise to God? Is it possible that pipes or strings of any kind can give God praise? Can God be pleased with sounds which are emitted by no sentient being, and have in themselves no meaning? If these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative: then, query, Is not the introduction of such instruments into the worship of God antichristian, and calculated to debase and ultimately ruin the spirit and influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? And should not all who wish well to the spread and establishment of pure and undefiled religion, lift up their hand, their influence, and their voice against them? The argument from their use in the Jewish service is futile in the extreme when applied to Christianity.

## CHAPTER 17

*David consults Nathan about building a temple for God, 1, 2. God sends him an answer by Nathan, informing him that Solomon shall build the house, 3-14. David receives the Divine purpose with humility and joy, and gives God praise, 15-27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 1.** *Now it came to pass* See every thing recorded in this chapter amply detailed in the notes on 2 Samuel 7:1, etc.

**Verse 5.** *But have gone from tent to tent* “I have transferred my tabernacle from Gilgal to Nob, from Nob to Shiloh, and from Shiloh to Gibeon.” -Targum and Jarchi.

**Verse 9.** *Neither shall the children of wickedness* They shall no more be brought into servitude as they were in the time they sojourned in Egypt. This is what is here referred to.

**Verse 12.** *I will establish his throne for ever.* David was a type of Christ; and concerning him the prophecy is literally true. See Isaiah 9:7, where there is evidently the same reference.

**Verse 13.** *I will not take my mercy away from him* I will not cut off his family from the throne, as I did that of his predecessor Saul.

**Verse 16.** *And what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* I am not of any regal family, and have no natural right to the throne.

**Verse 25.** *Hath found in his heart to pray* The Targum expresses a full sense: “Therefore thy servant hath found an opening of mouth, that he might pray before Thee.”

**Verse 27.** *For thou blessest, O Lord* “Thou beginnest to bless the house of thy servant, therefore it shall be blessed for ever.” -T.

THE reader is requested to refer to 2 Sam. 7, and the notes there for many particulars that belong to the parallel places here, and which it should answer no good purpose to repeat in this place.

## CHAPTER 18

*David smites the Philistines, and takes Gath, 1. Reduces the Moabites, 2. Vanquishes Hadarezer, king of Zobah, 3, 4. Overcomes the Syrians of Damascus, and takes several of their cities, 5-8. Tou, king of Hamath, congratulates him on his victory, and sends him vessels of silver, gold, and brass, 9, 10. Those and the different spoils he had taken from the conquered nations, he dedicates to God, 11. Abishai defeats the Edomites, 12, 13. David reigns over all Israel, 14. His officers, 15-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1. *David-took Gath and her towns*** See the comparison between this chapter and 2 Samuel 8:1, etc., in the notes on the latter.

**Verse 2. *Brought gifts*** Were laid under tribute.

**Verse 9. *Tou king of Hamath*** Called Toi in 2 Samuel 8:9.

**Verse 12. *Abishai-slew of the Edomites*** This victory is attributed to David, 2 Samuel 8:13. He sent Abishai against them, and he defeated them: this is with great propriety attributed to David as commander-in-chief; qui facit per alterum, facit per se.

**Verse 15. *Joab-was over the host*** General-in-chief.

***Jehoshaphat-recorder.*** The king's remembrancer, or historiographer royal.

**Verse 16. *Zadok-and Abimelech-priests*** Both high priests; one at Gibeon, and the other at Jerusalem, as we have seen 1 Chronicles 16:39.

***Shavsha was scribe*** Called Seraiah, 2 Samuel 8:17.

**Verse 17. *Cherethites and the Pelethites*** See the note on 2 Samuel 8:18.

The Targum says, "Benaiah was over the great Sanhedrin and the small Sanhedrin, and consulted Urim and Thummim. And at his command the archers and slingers went to battle."

*The sons of David* These were the highest in authority.

## CHAPTER 19

*David sends a congratulatory message to Hanun, king of Ammon, 1, 2. He treats the messengers with great incivility, 3, 4. David is exasperated, but condoles with the degraded messengers, 5. The Ammonites prepare for war, and hire thirty-two thousand chariots, and besiege Medeba, 6, 7. David sends Joab to attack them; he defeats the Syrians and Ammonites, 8-15. The discomfited Syrians recruit their army, and invade David's territories beyond Jordan; he attacks them, kills Shophach their general, seven thousand charioteers, and forty thousand of their infantry, 16-18. The Syrians abandon the Ammonites and make a separate peace with David, 19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 1.** *Now it came to pass* See the same history, 2 Samuel 10:1, etc., and the notes there.

**Verse 4.** *And cut off their garments in the midst* Usque ad eorum, pudenda. So the Targum, Jarchi, and others; leaving exposed what nature and decency require to be concealed. See on 2 Samuel 10:4.

**Verse 6.** *Chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia* These are not mentioned in the parallel place in Samuel; probably they did not arrive till the Ammonites and their other allies were defeated by the Israelites in the first battle.

**Verse 7.** *Thirty and two thousand* The whole number mentioned in Samuel is, Syrians, of Beth-rehob, and of Zoba, twenty thousand; of King Maacah, one thousand; of Ish-tob, twelve thousand; in all thirty-three thousand. Of chariots or cavalry there is no mention. These could not have been the whole army.

**Verse 13.** *Be of good courage* See the note on 2 Samuel 10:12.



**Verse 18. *Forty thousand footmen*** See this number accounted for in the note on 2 Samuel 10:18.

**Verse 19. *They made peace with David, and became his servants*** See on 2 Samuel 10:19, and the concluding note in that place; and see for omissions in Chronicles, the preface to these books.

## CHAPTER 20

*Joab smites the city of Rabbah; and David puts the crown of its king upon his own head, and treats the people of the city with great rigour, 1-3. First battle with the Philistines, 4. Second battle with the Philistines, 5. Third battle with the Philistines, 6, 7. In these battles three giants are slain, 8.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 1.** *After the year was expired, at the time that kings go out to battle* About the spring of the year; see the note on 2 Samuel 11:1.

After this verse the parallel place in Samuel relates the whole story of David and Bath-sheba, and the murder of Uriah, which the compiler of these books passes over as he designedly does almost every thing prejudicial to the character of David. All he states is, but David tarried at Jerusalem; and, while he thus tarried, and Joab conducted the war against the Ammonites, the awful transactions above referred to took place.

**Verse 2.** *David took the crown of their king-off his head* See 2 Samuel 12:30.

**Precious stones in it** The Targum says, “And there was set in it a precious stone, worth a talent of gold; this was that magnetic stone that supported the woven gold in the air.” What does he mean?

**Verse 3.** *He brought out the people* See this transaction particularly explained in the notes on the parallel places, 2 Samuel 12:30, 31.

**Verse 5.** *Elhanan the son of Jair* See the note on 2 Samuel 21:19. The Targum says, “David, the son of Jesse, a pious man, who rose at midnight to sing praises to God, slew Lachmi, the brother of Goliath, the same day on which he slew Goliath the Gittite, whose spear-staff was like a weaver’s beam.”

**Verse 6. *Fingers and toes were four and twenty*** See the note on 2 Samuel 21:20.

**Verse 8. *These were born unto the giant in Gath*** “These were born לִהְרָפָא leharapha, to that Rapha in Gath, or to Arapha.” So the Vulgate, Septuagint, and Chaldee.

THE compiler of these books passes by also the incest of Amnon with his sister Tamar, and the rebellion of Absalom, and the awful consequences of all these. These should have preceded the fourth verse. These facts could not be unknown to him, for they were notorious to all; but he saw that they were already amply detailed in books which were accredited among the people, and the relations were such as no friend to piety and humanity could delight to repeat. On these grounds the reader will give him credit for the omission. See on 1 Chronicles 20:1.

## CHAPTER 21

*David is tempted by Satan to take the numbers of the people of Israel and Judah, 1, 2. Joab remonstrates, but the king is determined, and Joab pleads in vain, 3, 4. He returns, and delivers in the number to the king, but reckons not Levi and Benjamin, 5. The Lord is displeased, and sends Gad to offer David his choice of three great national calamities; famine, war, or pestilence, 6-12. David submits himself to God, and a pestilence is sent, which destroys seventy thousand, 13, 14. At David's intercession the destroying angel is restrained at the threshing-floor of Ornan, 15-17. He buys the piece of ground, builds an altar to the Lord and offers sacrifices, and the plague is stayed, 18-30.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 1.** *And Satan stood up against Israel* See the notes on the parallel place, 2 Samuel 24:1, etc.

**Verse 5.** *All they of Israel were a thousand thousand-Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand* In the parallel place, 2 Samuel 24:9, the men of Israel are reckoned eight hundred thousand, and the men of Judah five hundred thousand: see the note there.

**Verse 6.** *Levi and Benjamin counted he not* The rabbins give the following reason for this: Joab, seeing that this would bring down destruction upon the people, purposed to save two tribes. Should David ask, Why have you not numbered the Levites? Joab purposed to say, Because the Levites are not reckoned among the children of Israel. Should he ask, Why have you not numbered Benjamin? he would answer, Benjamin has been already sufficiently punished, on account of the treatment of the woman at Gibeah: if, therefore, this tribe were to be again punished, who would remain?

**Verse 12.** *Three days-the pestilence in the land* In 2 Samuel 24:13, seven years of famine are mentioned: see the note there.

**Verse 13. David said-I am in a great strait** The Targum reasons thus: “And David said to Gad, If I choose famine, the Israelites may say, The granaries of David are full of corn; neither doth he care should the people of Israel die with hunger. And if I choose war, and fly before an enemy, the Israelites may say, David is a strong and warlike man, and he cares not though the people of Israel should fall by the sword. I am brought into a great strait; I will deliver myself now into the HAND of the WORD of the LORD, **בִּיד מֵימְרָא דַּיִ** beyad meymera dayai, for his mercies are many; but into the hands of the children of men I will not deliver myself.”

**Verse 15. And God sent an angel** Thus the Targum: “And the WORD of the LORD sent the angel of death against Jerusalem to destroy it; and he beheld the ashes of the binding of Isaac at the foot of the altar, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, which he made in the Mount of Worship; and the house of the upper sanctuary, where are the souls of the righteous, and the image of Jacob fixed on the throne of glory; and he turned in his WORD from the evil which he designed to do unto them; and he said to the destroying angel, Cease; take Abishai their chief from among them, and cease from smiting the rest of the people. And the angel which was sent from the presence of the Lord stood at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

**Verse 20. Ornan turned back, and saw the angel** The Septuagint say, And Orna turned, **καὶ εἶδε τὸν βασιλεῖα**, and saw the KING. The Syriac and Arabic say, David saw the angel; and do not mention Ornan in this place. Houbigant translates the same reading **הַמֶּלֶךְ** hammalech, the king, for **הַמַּלְאָךְ** hammalach, the angel, and vindicates his version from the parallel place, 2 Samuel 24:20, where it is said, he saw David: but there is no word of his seeing the angel. But the seeing David is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 21:21; though Houbigant supposes that the 20th verse refers to his seeing the king while he was at a distance; the 21st, to his seeing him when he came into the threshing-floor. In the first instance he and his sons were afraid when they saw the king coming, and this caused them to hide themselves; but when he came into the threshing-floor, they were obliged to appear before him. One of Kennicott’s MSS. has **הַמֶּלֶךְ** the king, instead of **הַמַּלְאָךְ** the angel. Some learned men contend for the former reading.

**Verse 24. *For the full price*** That is, six hundred shekels full weight of pure gold.

**Verse 26. *He answered him-by fire*** In answer to David's prayers, God, to show that he had accepted him, and was now pacified towards him and the people, sent fire from heaven and consumed the offerings.

**Verse 30. *Because of the sword of the angel*** This is given as a reason why David built an altar in the threshing-floor of Ornan: he was afraid to go to Gibeon, because of the sword of the destroying angel, or he was afraid of delaying the offerings so long as his going thither would require, lest the destroying angel should in the mean while exterminate the people; therefore he hastily built an altar in that place, and on it made the requisite offerings, and by the fire from heaven God showed that he had accepted his act and his devotion. Such interventions as these must necessarily maintain in the minds of the people a full persuasion of the truth and Divine origin of their religion.

For a more circumstantial account of these transactions, see the notes on 2 Samuel 24:1, Ac., in which several difficulties of the text are removed.

## CHAPTER 22

*David makes great preparations for building a temple to the Lord, 1-5; gives the necessary directions to Solomon concerning it, 6-16; and exhorts the princes of Israel to assist in the undertaking, 17-19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22

**Verse 1. *David said, This is the house of the Lord*** Till a temple is built for his name, this place shall be considered the temple of God; and on this altar, and not on that at Gibeon, shall the burnt-offerings of Israel be made. David probably thought that this was the place on which God designed that his house should be built; and perhaps it was this that induced him to buy, not only the threshing-floor, but probably some adjacent ground also, as Calmet supposes, that there might be sufficient room for such a building.

**Verse 2. *The strangers that were in the land*** Those who had become proselytes to the Jewish religion, at least so far as to renounce idolatry, and keep what were called the seven Noahic precepts. These were to be employed in the more servile and difficult parts of the work: see on 1 Kings 9:21. For the account of building the temple, see 1 Kings 5-9, and the notes there.

**Verse 3. *Irons-for the nails, etc.*** Iron for bolts, bars, hinges, etc., etc.

**Verse 6. *Solomon-is young and tender*** He is as yet without complete knowledge and due experience; and it is necessary that I should make as much preparation for the work as I possibly can; especially as the house is to be exceedingly magnificent.

**Verse 8. *Thou hast shed blood abundantly*** Heathens, Jews, and Christians, have all agreed that soldiers of any kind should have nothing to do with Divine offices. Shedding of human blood but ill comports with the benevolence of God or the spirit of the Gospel.

Aeneas, overpowered by his enemies, while fighting for his parents, his family, and his country, finding farther resistance hopeless, endeavors to carry off his aged father, his wife, young son, and his household gods; but as he was just come from slaughter, he would not even handle these objects of superstition, but confided them to his father, whom he took on his shoulders, and carried out of the burning of Troy.

*Tu, genitor, cape sacra manu, patriosque penates:  
Me bello tanto digressum, et caede recenti,  
Attractare nefas; donec me flumine vivo  
Abluero.*

*AEN. ii., ver. 717.*

*“Our country gods, our relics, and the bands,  
Hold you, my father, in your guiltless hands:  
In me ‘tis impious holy things to bear,  
Red as I am with slaughter, new from war;  
Till, in some living stream, I cleanse the guilt  
Of dire debate, and blood in battle spilt.”*

*DRYDEN.*

See the note at the end of 2 Samuel 7:25.

**Verse 9. His name shall be Solomon** שלמה Shelomoh, from שלם shalom, he was peaceable; and therefore, says the Lord, alluding to the name, I will give PEACE, שלום SHALOM, in his days.

**Verse 14. In my trouble I have prepared** Notwithstanding all the wars in which I have been engaged, all the treacheries with which I have been surrounded, all the domestic troubles with which I have been overwhelmed, I never lost sight of this great object, the building of a house for God, that his worship might be established in the land. I have curtailed my expenses, and have lived in comparative poverty that I might save all I possibly could for this building.

**A hundred thousand talents of gold** A talent of gold weighed three thousand shekels, and was worth five thousand and seventy-five pounds, fifteen shillings, and seven pence half-penny. One hundred thousand such talents would therefore amount to five hundred and seven millions, five



hundred and seventy-eight thousand, one hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling. These sums are variously computed by several writers.

***A thousand thousand talents of silver*** A talent of silver weighed three thousand shekels, and was worth three hundred and fifty-three pounds, eleven shillings, and ten pence. A thousand thousand, or a million, of such talents would amount to the immense sum of three hundred and fifty-three millions, five hundred and ninety-one thousand, six hundred and sixty-six pounds, thirteen shillings, and four pence, sterling; both sums amounting to eight hundred and sixty-one millions, one hundred and sixty-nine thousand, seven hundred and ninety-one pounds, thirteen shillings, and four pence.

***Thou mayest add thereto.*** Save as I have saved, out of the revenues of the state, and thou mayest also add something for the erection and splendor of this house. This was a gentle though pointed hint, which was not lost on Solomon.

**Verse 18. *Is not the Lord your God with you?*** “Is not the WORD of the Lord your God your assistant?” -T.

***Hath he not given you rest on every side?*** David at this time was not only king of Judea, but had also subdued most of the surrounding nations.

Thus Solomon came to the Jewish throne with every possible advantage. Had he made a proper use of his state and of his talents, he would have been the greatest as well as the wisest of sovereigns. But alas! how soon did this pure gold become dim! He began with an unlawful matrimonial connection; this led him to a commerce that was positively forbidden by the law of God: he then multiplied his matrimonial connections with heathen women; they turned his heart away from God, and the once wise and holy Solomon died a fool and an idolater.

## CHAPTER 23

*David makes Solomon king, 1. Numbers the Levites, and appoints them their work, 2-5. The sons of Levi, Gershom, Kohath, Merari, and their descendants, 6-12. The sons of Amram, and their descendants, 13. The sons of Moses, and their descendants, 14-24. David appoints the Levites to wait on the priests for the service of the sanctuary, 25-32.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 23

**Verse 1.** *David was old and full of days* On the phrase full of days, see the note on Genesis 25:8.

**Verse 3.** *Thirty years and upward* The enumeration of the Levites made in the desert, Numbers 4:3, was from thirty years upwards to fifty years. In this place, the latter limit is not mentioned, probably because the service was not so laborious now; for the ark being fixed they had no longer any heavy burdens to carry, and therefore even an old man might continue to serve the tabernacle. David made another ordinance afterwards; see on 1 Chronicles 23:24, 27.

**Verse 5.** *Four thousand praised the Lord* David made this distribution according to his own judgment, and from the dictates of his piety; but it does not appear that he had any positive Divine authority for such arrangements. As to the instruments of music which he made they are condemned elsewhere; see Amos 6:5, to which this verse is allowed to be the parallel.

**Verse 11.** *Therefore they were in one reckoning* The family of Shimei, being small, was united with that of Laadan, that the two families might do that work which otherwise belonged to one, but which would have been too much for either of these separately.

**Verse 13.** *To bless in his name* To bless the people by invoking the name of the Lord.

**Verse 14. *Moses the man of God*** “Moses the prophet of God,” -T.

**Verse 16.** To this verse the Targum adds, “The same Jonathan, who became a false prophet, repented in his old age; and David made him his chief treasurer.”

**Verse 17. *But the sons of Rehabiah were very many.*** The Targum says, “On account of the merits of Moses, the posterity of Rehabiah were multiplied to more than sixty myriads.”

**Verse 22. *Their brethren the sons of Kish took them.*** This was according to the law made Numbers 27:1, etc., and Numbers 36:5-9, in favor of the daughters of Zelophehad, that women who were heiresses should marry in the family of the tribe of their father, and that their estates should not be alienated from them.

**Verse 24. *Twenty years and upward.*** It appears that this was a different ordinance from that mentioned 1 Chronicles 23:3. At first he appointed the Levites to serve from thirty years and upward; now from twenty years. These were David’s last orders; see 1 Chronicles 23:27. They should begin at an earlier age, and continue later.

This was not a very painful task; the ark being now fixed, and the Levites very numerous, there could be no drudgery.

**Verse 28. *Purifying of all holy things*** Keeping all the vessels and utensils belonging to the sacred service clean and neat.

**Verse 29. *Both for the shew-bread*** It was the priests’ office to place this bread before the Lord, and it was their privilege to feed on the old loaves when they were replaced by the new. Some of the rabbins think that the priests sowed, reaped, ground, kneaded, and baked the grain of which the shew-bread was made. This appears to be a conceit. Jerome, in his comment on Malachi 1:6, mentions it in these words: “Panis propositionis quos, juxta traditiones Hebraicas, ipsi serere, ipsi demetere, ipsi molere, ipsi coquere debebatis.”

***For all manner of measure and size*** The standards of all weights and measures were kept at the sanctuary, and by those there deposited all the weights and measures of the land were to be tried. See the note on Exodus 30:13.

**Verse 30. *To stand every morning*** At the offering of the morning and evening sacrifice, they sounded their musical instruments, and sang praises to God.

**Verse 32. *The charge of the sons of Aaron*** It was the priests' business to kill, flay, and dress, as well as to offer, the victims, but being few, they were obliged to employ the Levites to flay those animals. The Levites were, properly speaking, servants to the priests, and were employed about the more servile part of Divine worship.

## CHAPTER 24

*David divides the families of Eleazar and Ithamar, by lot, into twenty-four courses, 1-19. How the rest of the sons of Levi were disposed of, 20-31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 24

**Verse 2. *Nadab and Abihu died before their father*** That is, during his lifetime.

***Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office.*** These two served the office during the life of their father Aaron; after his death Eleazar succeeded in the high priesthood. And under Eli the high priest, the family of Ithamar re-entered into that office.

**Verse 3. *And Ahimelech*** Ahimelech is put here for Abiathar, who was high priest in the days of David. Abiathar had also the name of Ahimelech, as well as his father. See Calmet.

**Verse 5. *They divided by lot*** This prevented jealousies: for, as all the families were equally noble, they had equal right to all ecclesiastical and civil distinctions.

**Verse 6. *And Shemaiah*** "Moses the great scribe, who is called Shemaiah, the son of Nethaneel, of the tribe of Levi, wrote them down." -T.

***One principal household-for Eleazar*** The family of Eleazar was the most illustrious of the sacerdotal families, because Eleazar was the first-born of Aaron, Ithamar's family was the second in order and dignity; therefore one of the principal families of Eleazar was first taken, and then one of Ithamar's, and thus alternately till the whole was finished.

**Verse 19. *Under Aaron their father*** That is, they followed the order and plans laid down by Aaron during his lifetime.

**Verse 26. *The sons of Merari*** It is remarkable that not a word is here spoken of the family of Gershom.

**Verse 31. *These likewise cast lots*** The Levites were divided into

## CHAPTER 25

*The number and offices of the singers and players on musical instruments; and their division by lot into twenty-four courses, 1-31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 25

**Verse 1. *David and the captains of the host*** The chiefs of those who formed the several orders: not military captains.

***Should prophesy*** Should accompany their musical instruments with prayer and singing.

**Verse 2. *Which prophesied*** Sung hymns and prayed. But the Targum understands this of prophesying in the proper sense of the term; and therefore says, "Who prophesied by the Holy Spirit." Jarchi is of the same opinion and quotes the case of Elisha, 2 Kings 3:15; While the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord [i.e., the spirit of prophecy] was upon him.

**Verse 3. *The sons of Jeduthun-six*** That is, six with their father, otherwise, there are but five. Hence it is said, they were under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, etc.

**Verse 5. *To lift up the horn*** "The horn of prophecy," says Jarchi; "to sound with the trumpet in the words of prophecy before the Lord." -T.

***Three daughters.*** These also were employed among the singers.

**Verse 7. *Two hundred fourscore and eight.*** That it twelve classes of twenty-four Levites each; for two hundred and eighty-eight divided by twelve quotes twenty-four.

**Verse 9. *For Asaph to Joseph*** His first-born.

***The second to Gedaliah*** The first-born of Jeduthun.

**Verse 10. *The third to Zaccur*** The first-born of Asaph.

**Verse 11. *The fourth to Izri*** The second son of Jeduthun.

**Verse 12. *The fifth to Nethaniah*** The third son of Asaph. Thus we find the lot did not run in any particular kind of order.

**Verse 14. *Jesharelah*** Supposed to be the same with Uzziel, son of Heman.

**Verse 31. *Romanti-ezer*** Both these names belong to the same person. He is mentioned also 1 Chronicles 25:4.

With this immense parade of noise and show, (David's own invention,) Christianity has nothing to do.



## CHAPTER 26

*The divisions of the porters, 1-12. The gates assigned to them, 13-19. Those who were over the treasures, 20-28. Different officers, 29-32.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 26

**Verse 1. *The divisions of the porters*** There were four classes of these, each of which belonged to one of the four gates of the temple, which opened to the four cardinal points of heaven. The eastern gate fell to Shelemiah; the northern, to Zechariah, 1 Chronicles 26:14; the southern, to Obed-edom, 1 Chronicles 26:15; the western, to Shuppim and Hosah, 1 Chronicles 26:16. These several persons were captains of these porter-bands or door-keepers at the different gates. There were probably a thousand men under each of these captains; as we find, from 1 Chronicles 23:5, that there were four thousand in all.

**Verse 5. *For God blessed him.*** “That is, Obed-edom; because of the ark of the Lord which was in his house; and to him was given the honor that he should see his children and grand-children, even fourscore and two, masters of the Levites.” -T. In 1 Chronicles 26:8, we have only sixty-two mentioned.

**Verse 6. *They were mighty men of valor.*** They were not only porters or door-keepers in the ordinary sense of the word, but they were a military guard for the gates: and perhaps in this sense alone we are to understand their office.

**Verse 12.** The rest of this chapter, with the whole of the 28th, is wanting both in the Syriac and Arabic.

**Verse 13. *They cast lots for every gate.*** None of these captains or their companies were permitted to choose which gate they would guard, but each took his appointment by lot.

**Verse 15. *The house of Asuppim.*** The house of the collections; the place where either the supplies of the porters, or the offerings made for the use of the priests and Levites, were laid up.

**Verse 16. *The gate Shallecheth*** The gate of the projections: probably that through which all the offal of the temple was carried out.

**Verse 17. *Eastward were six Levites*** It is supposed that there were more guards set at this eastern gate, because it was more frequented than the others. At each of the other gates were only four; at this, six.

**Verse 20. *The treasures of the house of God*** Where the money was kept, which was to be expended in oblations for the temple. — Jarchi.

**Verse 24. *Shebuel the son of Gershom*** “Shebuel, that is, Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, who returned to God [שבואל shebuel.] And David, seeing him expert in money matters, constituted him chief treasurer.” -T.

**Verse 27. *The spoils won in battles did they dedicate*** It seems these were intended for its repairs. This custom prevailed amongst almost all the people of the earth. All who acknowledged any supreme Being, believed that victory could only come through him; and therefore thought it quite rational to give him a share of the spoils. Proofs of this exist in all ancient histories: thus Virgil:—

*Irruimus ferro, et divos, ipsumque vocamus  
In partem praedamque Jovem.*

*AEN. iii., ver. 222.*

*“With weapons we the welcome prey invade:  
Then call the gods for partners of our feast,  
And Jove himself, the chief invited guest.”*

*DRYDEN.*

On this passage Servius observes: *Ipsum vocamus. Ipsum regem deorum, cui de praeda debetur aliquid: nam Romanis moris fuit, ut bella gessuri de parte praedae aliquid numinibus pollicerentur: adeo ut Romae fuerit unum templum JOVIS PRAEDATORIS: non quod praedae praeest, sed quod ei ex praeda aliquid debeatur.* “Jupiter himself, the king of the gods, to whom a

portion of the prey was due: for it was a custom among the Romans, when entering on a war, to promise some part of the prey to their deities. And there was a temple at Rome dedicated to JUPITER PRAEDATOR, not because he presided over the prey, but because a part of the prey was due to him.”

**Verse 29. *Outward business*** Work done without the city; cutting of timber, hewing stones, ploughing the fields belonging to the sanctuary. — Jarchi.

**Verse 30. *In all the business of the Lord*** Every thing that concerned ecclesiastical matters.

***In the service of the king***. Every thing that concerned civil affairs: see also 1 Chronicles 26:32.

Thus courts of ecclesiastical and civil judicature were established in the land; and due care taken to preserve and insure the peace of the Church, and the safety of the state; without which the public welfare could neither be secured nor promoted. Whatever affects religion in any country, must affect the state or government of that country: true religion alone can dispose men to civil obedience. Therefore, it is the interest of every state to protect and encourage religion. It would certainly be ruinous to true religion, to make the state dependent on the Church; nor should the Church be dependent on the state. Let them mutually support each other; and let the state rule by the laws, and the Church live by the Bible.

## CHAPTER 27

*An account of the twelve captains who were over the monthly course of twenty-four thousand men; each captain serving one month in turn, 1. The names of the twelve, and the months in which they served, 2-15. The names of the rulers of the twelve tribes, 16-22. The reasons why the whole number of Israel and Judah had not been taken, 23, 24. The persons who were over the king's property, treasures, fields, flocks, etc., 25-31. His officers of state, 32-34.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 27

**Verse 1. *The chief fathers and captains of thousands*** The patriarchs, chief generals, or generals of brigade. This enumeration is widely different from the preceding. In that, we have the orders and courses of the priests and the Levites in their ecclesiastical ministrations; in this, we have the account of the order of the civil service, that which related simply to the political state of the king and the kingdom. Twenty-four persons, chosen out of David's worthies, each of whom had a second, were placed over twenty-four thousand men, who all served a month in turn at a time; and this was the whole of their service during the year, after which they attended to their own affairs. Thus the king had always on foot a regular force of twenty-four thousand, who served without expense to him or the state, and were not oppressed by the service, which took up only a twelfth part of their time, and by this plan he could at any time, when the exigency of the state required it, bring into the field twelve times twenty-four thousand, or two hundred and eighty-eight thousand fighting men, independently of the twelve thousand officers, which made in the whole an effective force of three hundred thousand soldiers; and all these men were prepared, disciplined, and ready at a call, without the smallest expense to the state or the king. These were, properly speaking, the militia of the Israelitish kingdom. See Calmet.

**Verse 2. *First course for the first month*** Instead of mentioning first, second, third, etc., month, the Targum names them thus: First month,

Nisan; second, Aiyar; third, Sivan; fourth, Tammuz; fifth, Ab; sixth, Elul; seventh, Tishri; eighth, Marchesvan; ninth, Cisleu; tenth, Tebeth; eleventh, Shebat; twelfth, Adar. No mention is made of a veadar or intercalary month.

**Verse 5. *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest*** Why should not this clause be read as it is in the Hebrew? “Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, a captain; and in his course,” etc. Or, as the Targum has it, “The third captain of the host for the month Sivan was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who was constituted a chief.” He is distinguished from Benaiah, the Pirathonite, who was over the eleventh month. Some think that the original word **הַכֹּהֵן** haccohen, which generally signifies priest, should be translated here a principal officer; so the margin has it. But, in the Old Testament, **כֹּהֵן** cohen signifies both prince and priest; and translating it by the former removes the difficulty from this place, for we well know that Benaiah never was a priest.

**Verse 7. *Asahel the brother of Joab*** This verse proves that the division and arrangement mentioned above were made before David was acknowledged king in Hebron; for Asahel, the brother of Joab, who was fourth captain, was slain by Abner, while Ishbosheth reigned over Israel at Mahanaim, 2 Samuel 2:19-23.

**Verse 16. *Over the tribes of Israel*** In this enumeration there is no mention of the tribes of Asher and Gad. Probably the account of these has been lost from this register. These rulers appear to have been all honorary men, without pay, like the lords lieutenants of our counties.

**Verse 24. *Neither was the number put in the account*** Joab did not return the whole number; probably the plague began before he had finished: or, he did not choose to give it in, as he had entered on this work with extreme reluctance; and he did not choose to tell the king how numerous they were.

**Verse 25. — 31. *Over the king's treasures*** We see from these verses in what the personal property of David consisted:-1. Treasures, gold, silver, etc. 2. Goods and grain in castles, cities villages, and in the fields. 3. Vineyards and their produce. 4. Olive-trees and their produce. 6. Neat cattle, in different districts. 6. Camels and asses: they had no horses. 7. Flocks, sheep, goats, etc.

**Verse 26.** See “1 Chronicles 27:25”.

**Verse 27.** See “1 Chronicles 27:25”.

**Verse 28.** See “1 Chronicles 27:25”.

**Verse 29.** See “1 Chronicles 27:25”.

**Verse 30.** See “1 Chronicles 27:25”.

**Verse 31.** See “1 Chronicles 27:25”.

**Verse 34. *And after Ahithophel*** The Targum is curious: “When they went to war, they asked counsel of Ahithophel; and, after the counsel of Ahithophel, they inquired by Urim and Thummim of Jehoiada, the son of Benaiah, prince of the Sanhedrin, and chief of the priesthood; and from Abiathar, the high priest. And after they had inquired by Urim and Thummim, they went out to battle, well armed with bows and slings; and Joab, the general of the king’s troops, led them on.” It is worthy of remark, that Obil, an Ishmaelite or Arab, was put over the camels, which is a creature of Arabia; and that Jaziz, a Hagarene, (the Hagarenes were shepherds by profession,) was put over the flocks: nothing went by favor; each was appointed to the office for which he was best qualified; and thus men of worth were encouraged, and the public service effectually promoted.

## CHAPTER 28

*David assembles the princes of Israel, and informs them that the temple was to be built by Solomon; to whom God had given the most gracious promises, 1-7. He exhorts them and him to be obedient to God, that they might continue to prosper, 8-10. He gives Solomon a pattern of the work, 11, 12; directs him concerning the courses of the priests and Levites, 13; gives also gold, by weight, for the different utensils of the temple, as God had directed him, 14-19; encourages Solomon to undertake the work, 20, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 28

**Verse 1. *David assembled*** This refers to the persons whose names and offices we have seen in the preceding chapter.

**Verse 2. *David-stood up upon his feet*** He was now very old, and chiefly confined to his bed, (see 1 Kings 1:47;) and while he was addressing his son Solomon, he continued on the bed; but when all the principal nobles of his kingdom came before him he received strength to arise and address them, standing on his feet.

**Verse 3. *Thou shalt not build a house*** See 2 Samuel 7:6, 13, and the observations at the end of that chapter.

**Verse 4. *Over Israel for ever*** The government should have no end, provided they continued to walk according to the commandments of God; see 1 Chronicles 28:7. The government, as referring to Christ, is, and will be, without end.

**Verse 8. *In the audience of our God*** “Before the Word of the Lord.” -T.

**Verse 10. *The Lord hath chosen thee*** “The Word of the Lord hath chosen thee.” -T.

**Verse 11. *David gave to Solomon -the pattern*** He gave him an ichnograph of the building, with elevations, sections, and specifications of every part;

and all this he received by inspiration from God himself, (see 1 Chronicles 28:12, 19,) just as Moses had received the plan of the tabernacle.

**The treasures thereof** גִּזְזֵי־זָכָיִךְ ganzaccaiv. The word גִּזְזֵי־זָכָיִךְ ganzach is not Hebrew, but is supposed to be Persian, the same word being found in Ezra 3:19. In this tongue we have the word [P] ganj, a granary, a hidden treasure, and [P] gunjoor, and [P] gunjineh, a treasure, treasury, or barn. Parkhurst supposes that it is compounded of גָּנָז ganaz, to treasure up, and זָכָיִךְ zach, pure; a treasury for the most precious things.

**Verse 12. All that he had by the Spirit** “By the Spirit of prophecy that was with him.” -T.

**Verse 14. Of gold by weight** The quantity of gold which was to be put in each article.

**Verse 15. For the candlesticks** There was but one chandelier in the tabernacle; there were ten in the temple. See 1 Kings 7:49.

**Verse 18. The chariot of the cherubims** “And the figure of the chariot, like to the figure of the propitiatory, where are the figures of the golden cherubim, extending their wings and covering the ark of the covenant of the Lord.” -T.

**Verse 19. Understand in writing** In some vision of ecstasy he had seen a regularly sketched out plan, which had made so deep an impression on his mind that he could readily describe it to his son.

“That the architecture of the temple,” says Dr. Delaney, “was of Divine origin, I, for my part, am fully satisfied from this passage, and am confirmed in this opinion by finding from Vilalpandas that the Roman, at least the Greek, architecture is derived from this, as from its fountain; and in my humble opinion even an infidel may easily believe these to be of Divine original, inasmuch as they are, at least the latter is, found perfect in the earliest models; nor hath the utmost reach of human wisdom, invention, and industry, been ever able to improve it, or alter it but to disadvantage, through the course of so many ages.”

**Verse 20. The Lord God-my God, will be with thee** “The Word of the Lord my God will be thy assistant.” -T.



**Verse 21. *Behold, the courses of the priests*** The priests and the Levites, the cunning artificers, and the princes of the people, will be at thy command. Thus David, having assigned him his work, and described the manner in which it was to be done, shows him who were to be his assistants in it, and encourages him in the great undertaking.

Here we find piety, good sense, prudence, zeal for the public welfare and God's glory, the strongest attachments to the worship of Jehovah, and concern for the ordinances of religion, all united; and Solomon has his danger, his duty, and his interest placed before him in the truest and most impressive light by his pious and sensible father.

## CHAPTER 29

*David enumerates the gifts which he designed for the building of the temple; and exhorts the princes and people to make their offerings, 1-5. They offer willingly, and to a great amount, 6-9. David's thanksgiving and prayer to God on the occasion, 10-19. The princes and people praise God, offer sacrifices and feasts before him, make Solomon King, and do him homage, 20-24. The Lord magnifies Solomon, 25. Concluding account of David's reign, character, and death, 26-30.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 29

**Verse 1. *The palace is not for man*** “The palace is not prepared for the name of a son of man, but for the name of the Word of the Lord God.” -T.

**Verse 2. *And marble stones*** אבני שיש abney shayish, which the Vulgate translates marmor Parium, Parian marble. Paros was one of the Cyclade islands, and produced the whitest and finest marble, that of which most of the finest works of antiquity have been made. That the word shaish means marble is probable from the Chaldee, which has אבני מרמוריייה abney marmoraiyah, marble stones. Josephus says that the temple was built of large blocks of white marble, beautifully polished, so as to produce a most splendid appearance. — Jos., Deuteronomy Bell. Jud., lib. v., c. 5, s. 2.

**Verse 5. *To consecrate his service*** למלאות ידו Iemalloth yado, to fill his hand; to bring an offering to the Lord.

**Verse 7. *Of gold five thousand talents*** These, at five thousand and seventy-five pounds, fifteen shillings, and seven pence halfpenny each, amount to twenty-five millions, three hundred and seventy-eight thousand nine hundred and six pounds, five shillings, sterling. If, with Dr. Prideaux, we estimate the golden talent at upwards of seven thousand pounds sterling, the value of these five thousand talents will be much more considerable. See the notes on Exodus 25:39; Matthew 18:24; and the calculations at the end of the notes on 2 Chronicles 9:29.

***Ten thousand drams*** Probably golden darics, worth each about twenty shillings, amounting to ten thousand pounds.

***Of silver ten thousand talents*** These, at three hundred and fifty-three pounds, eleven shillings, and ten-pence halfpenny, each, amount to three millions five hundred and thirty-five thousand, nine hundred and thirty-seven pounds, ten shillings, sterling.

***Brass eighteen thousand talents*** Each six hundred and fifty-seven thousand grains, amount to one thousand and twenty-six tons, eleven hundred weight, and one quarter.

***One hundred thousand talents of iron*** Each six hundred and fifty-seven thousand grains, amount to five thousand seven hundred and three tons, two hundred weight, and a half.

**Verse 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness*** This verse is thus paraphrased by the Targum: “Thine, O Lord, is the magnificence; for thou hast created the world by thy great power, and by thy might hast led our fathers out of Egypt, and with great signs hast caused them to pass through the Red Sea. Thou hast appeared gloriously on Mount Sinai, with troops of angels, in giving law to thy people. Thou hast gained the victory over Amalek; over Sihon and Og, kings of Canaan. By the splendor of thy majesty thou hast caused the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, until thy people, the house of Israel, were avenged of their enemies. All things that are in heaven and earth are the work of thy hands, and thou rulest over and sustainest whatsoever is in the heavens and in the earth. Thine, O Lord, is the kingdom in the firmament; and thou art exalted above the heavenly angels, and over all who are constituted rulers upon earth.”

**Verse 14. *Of thine own have we given thee.*** “For from thy presence all good comes, and of the blessings of thy hands have we given thee.”  
-Targum.

**Verse 15. *For we are strangers*** We have here neither right nor property.

***And sojourners*** Lodging as it were for a night, in the mansion of another.

***As were all our fathers*** These were, as we are supported by thy bounty, and tenants at will to thee.

***Our days on the earth are as a shadow*** They are continually declining, fading, and passing away. This is the place of our sojourning, and here we have no substantial, permanent residence.

***There is none abiding.*** However we may wish to settle and remain in this state of things, it is impossible, because every earthly form is passing swiftly away, all is in a state of revolution and decay, and there is no abiding, מִקְוֵה mikveh, no expectation, that we shall be exempt from those changes and chances to which our fathers were subjected. “As the shadow of a bird flying in the air [אָוִיר avir] of heaven, such are our days upon the earth; nor is there any hope to any son of man that he shall live for ever.”  
-Targum.

**Verse 18. *Keep this for ever*** All the good dispositions which myself and my people have, came from thee; continue to support and strengthen them by the same grace by which they have been inspired!

**Verse 19. *Give unto Solomon-a perfect heart*** This he did, but Solomon abused his mercies.

**Verse 20. *Worshipped the Lord, and the king.*** They did reverence to God as the supreme Ruler, and to the king as his deputy.

**Verse 21. *With their drink-offerings*** The Targum says a thousand drink-offerings, making these libations equal in number to the other offerings.

***And sacrifices*** These were peace-offerings, offered for the people, and on the flesh of which they feasted.

**Verse 22. *They made Solomon-king the second time*** The first time of his being anointed and proclaimed king was when his brother Adonijah affected the throne; and Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah anointed and proclaimed him in a hurry, and without pomp. See 1 Kings 1:39. Now that all is quiet, and David his father dead, (for he was probably so at the time of the second anointing,) they anointed and proclaimed him afresh, with due ceremonies, sacrifices, etc.

***To be the chief governor*** To be the vicegerent or deputy of Jehovah; for God never gave up his right of king in Israel; those called kings were only

his lieutenants: hence it is said, 1 Chronicles 29:23, “that Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father.”

**Verse 24. *Submitted themselves*** נתנו יד תחת שלמה nathenu yad tachath Shelomoh. “They gave the hand under Solomon;” they swore fealty to him. We have already seen that putting the hand under the thigh (super sectionem circumcissionis) was the form of taking an oath. See the note on Genesis 24:9.

**Verse 28. *And he died*** David, at his death, had every thing that his heart could wish. 1. A good old age, having lived as long as living could be desirable, and having in the main enjoyed good health. 2. Full of days; having lived till he saw every thing that he lived for either accomplished or in a state of forwardness. 3. Full of riches; witness the immense sums left for the temple. 4. Full of honor; having gained more renown than any crowned head ever did, either before his time or since-laurels that are fresh to the present hour.

**Verse 29. *The acts of David-first and last*** Those which concerned him in private life, as well as those which grew out of his regal government. All these were written by three eminent men, personally acquainted with him through the principal part of his life; these were Samuel and Gad the seers, and Nathan the prophet. These writings are all lost, except the particulars interspersed in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, none of which are the records mentioned here.

**Verse 30. *The times that went over him*** The transactions of his reign, and the occurrences and vicissitudes in his own kingdom, as well as those which were over all the kingdoms of the countries, i.e., in the surrounding nations, in most of which David had a share during his forty years’ reign. Relative to the character of David, see a few remarks in the note on 1 Kings 2:10; and see more at the end of the Psalms.

Dr. Delaney gives a just view of his character in a few words: “To sum up all, David was a true believer, a zealous adorer of God, teacher of his law and worship, and inspirer of his praise. A glorious example, a perpetual and inexhaustible fountain of true piety. A consummate and unequalled hero; a skillful and fortunate captain; a steady patriot; a wise ruler; a faithful, generous, and magnanimous friend; and, what is yet rarer, a no less

generous and magnanimous enemy. A true penitent, a divine musician, a sublime poet, and an inspired prophet. By birth, a peasant; by merit, a prince; in youth, a hero; in manhood, a monarch; and in age, a saint." The matter of Uriah and Bath-sheba is his great but only blot! There he sinned deeply; and no man ever suffered more in his body, soul, and domestic affairs, than he did in consequence. His penitence was as deep and as extraordinary as his crime; and nothing could surpass both but that eternal mercy that took away the guilt, assuaged the sorrow, and restored this most humbled transgressor to character, holiness, and happiness. Let the God of David be exalted for ever!

## THE SECOND BOOK

OF

## THE CHRONICLES

### Chronological Notes relative to this Book

- Year from the Creation, according to the English Bible, 2989.
- Year before the Incarnation, 1015.
- Year before the first Olympiad, 239.
- Year before the building of Rome, according to Varro, 262.
- Year of the Julian period, 3699.
- Year of the Dionysian period, 507.
- Cycle of the Sun, 3.
- Cycle of the Moon, 13.
- Year of Acastus, the second perpetual archon of the Athenians, 31.
- Pyritiades was king over the Assyrians about this time, according to Scaliger and others. He was the thirty-seventh monarch, including Belus, according to Africanus; and the thirty-third according to Eusebius.
- Year of Alba Sylvius, the sixth king of the Latins, 15.
- Year of Solomon, king of the Hebrews, 1.

### CHAPTER 1

*Solomon, and the chiefs of the congregation, go to Gibeon, where was the tabernacle of the Lord, and the brazen altar; and there he offers a thousand sacrifices, 1-6. The Lord appears to him in a dream, and gives him permission to ask any gift, 7. He asks wisdom, 8-10, which is granted; and riches, wealth, and honor besides, 11, 12. His kingdom is established, 13. His chariots, horsemen, and horses, 14. His abundant*

*riches, 15. He brings horses, linen yarn, and chariots, at a fixed price, out of Egypt, 16, 17.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. *And Solomon the son of David*** The very beginning of this book shows that it is a continuation of the preceding, and should not be thus formally separated from it. See the preface to the first book. { 1 Chronicles 1:1 }

***The Lord his God was with him*** “The WORD of the Lord was his support.” -Targum.

**Verse 2. *Then Solomon spake*** This is supposed to have taken place in the second year of his reign.

**Verse 4. *But the ark*** The tabernacle and the brazen altar remained still at Gibeon; but David had brought away the ark out of the tabernacle, and placed it in a tent at Jerusalem; 2 Samuel 6:2, 17.

**Verse 5. *Sought unto it.*** Went to seek the Lord there.

**Verse 7. *In that night*** The night following the sacrifice. On Solomon’s choice, see the notes on 1 Kings 3:5-15.

**Verse 9. *Let thy promise*** דברך debarcha, thy word; פתגמך pithgamach, Targum. It is very remarkable that when either God or man is represented as having spoken a word then the noun פתגם pithgam is used by the Targumist; but when word is used personally, then he employs the noun מִימְרָא meymera, which appears to answer to the λογος of St. John, John 1:1, etc.

**Verse 14. *He had a thousand and four hundred chariots*** For these numbers, see the notes on 1 Kings 4:26.

**Verse 15. *Made silver and gold*** See on 1 Kings 10:27, 28.

**Verse 16. *Linen yarn*** See the note on 1 Kings 10:28, where this subject is particularly examined.



**Verse 17. *A horse for a hundred and fifty*** Suppose we take the shekel at the utmost value at which it has been rated, three shillings; then the price of a horse was about twenty-two pounds ten shillings.

ON Solomon's multiplying horses, Bishop Warburton has made some judicious remarks:—

“Moses had expressly prohibited the multiplying of horses, Deuteronomy 17:16, by which the future king was forbidden to establish a body of cavalry, because this could not be effected without sending into Egypt, with which people God had forbidden any communication, as this would be dangerous to religion. When Solomon had violated this law, and multiplied horses to excess, 1 Kings 4:26, it was soon attended with those fatal consequences that the law foretold: for this wisest of kings having likewise, in violation of another law, married Pharaoh's daughter, (the early fruits of this commerce,) and then, by a repetition of the same crime, but a transgression of another law, having espoused more strange women, 1 Kings 11:1; they first, in defiance of a fourth law, persuaded him to build them idol temples for their use, and afterwards, against a fifth law, brought him to erect other temples for his own. Now the original of all this mischief was the forbidden traffic with Egypt for horses; for thither were the agents of Solomon sent to mount his cavalry. Nay, this great king even turned factor for the neighboring monarchs, 2 Chronicles 1:17, and this opprobrious commerce was kept up by his successors and attended with the same pernicious consequences. Isaiah denounces the mischiefs of this traffic; and foretells that one of the good effects of leaving it would be the forsaking of their idolatries, Isaiah 31:1, 4, 6, 7.” -See Divine Legation, vol. iii., p. 289 and Dr. Dodd's Notes.

## CHAPTER 2

*Solomon determines to build a temple, 1. The number of his workmen, 2. Sends to Hiram for artificers and materials, 3-10. Hiram sends him a favorable answer, and makes an agreement with him concerning the labor to be done, and the wages to be paid to his men, 11-16. The number of strangers in the land, and how employed, 17, 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. A house for the name of the Lord** A temple for the worship of Jehovah.

*A house for his kingdom.* A royal palace for his own use as king of Israel.

**Verse 3. Solomon sent to Hiram** This man's name is written חִירָם Chiram in Kings; and in Chronicles, חִירָם Chiram: there is properly no difference, only a ך yod and a ך vau interchanged. See on 1 Kings 5:2.

**Verse 6. Seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens** "For the lower heavens, the middle heavens, and the upper heavens cannot contain him, seeing he sustains all things by the arm of his power. Heaven is the throne of his glory, the earth his footstool; the deep, and the whole world, are sustained by the spirit of his Word, [בְּרוּחַ מִיְמַרְיָהּ] beruach meqmereih.] Who am I, then, that I should build him a house?" -Targum.

**Save only to burn sacrifice** It is not under the hope that the house shall be able to contain him, but merely for the purpose of burning incense to him, and offering him sacrifice, that I have erected it.

**Verse 7. Send me-a man cunning to work** A person of great ingenuity, who is capable of planning and directing, and who may be over the other artists.

**Verse 11. Answered in writing** Though correspondence among persons of distinction was, in these early times, carried on by confidential

messengers, yet we find that epistolary correspondence did exist, and that kings could write and read in what were called by the proud and insolent Greeks and Romans barbarous nations. Nearly two thousand years after this we find a king on the British throne who could not sign his own name. About the year of our Lord 700, Withred, king of Kent, thus concludes a charter to secure the liberties of the Church: Ego Wythredus rex Cantiae haec omnia suprascripta et confirmavi, atque, a me dictata propria manu signum sanctae crucis pro ignorantia literarum expressi; “All the above dictated by myself, I have confirmed; and because I cannot write, I have with my own hand expressed this by putting the sign of the holy cross +.”  
-See Wilkins’ Concilta.

**Verse 13. *I have sent a conning man*** His name appears to have been Hiram, or Hiram Abi: see the notes on 1 Kings 7:13, 14.

**Verse 16. *In floats by sea to Joppa*** See the note on 1 Kings 5:9, and on the parallel places, for other matters contained in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

*Solomon begins to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign on Mount Moriah, 1, 2. Its dimensions, ornaments, and pillars, 3-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *In Mount Moriah*** Supposed to be the same place where Abraham was about to offer his son Isaac; so the Targum: “Solomon began to build the house of the sanctuary of the Lord at Jerusalem, in the place where Abraham had prayed and worshipped in the name of the Lord. This is the place of the earth where all generations shall worship the Lord. Here Abraham was about to offer his son Isaac for a burnt-offering; but he was snatched away by the WORD of the Lord, and a ram placed in his stead. Here Jacob prayed when he fled from the face of Esau his brother; and here the angel of the Lord appeared to David, at which time David built an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor which he bought from Araunah the Jebusite.”

**Verse 3. *The length-after the first measure was threescore cubits*** It is supposed that the first measure means the cubit used in the time of Moses, contradistinguished from that used in Babylon, and which the Israelites used after their return from captivity; and, as the books of Chronicles were written after the captivity, it was necessary for the writer to make this remark, lest it should be thought that the measurement was by the Babylonish cubit, which was a palm or one-sixth shorter than the cubit of Moses. See the same distinction observed by Ezekiel, Ezekiel 40:5; 43:13.

**Verse 4. *The height was a hundred and twenty*** Some think this should be twenty only; but if the same building is spoken of as in 1 Kings 6:2, the height was only thirty cubits. Twenty is the reading of the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Septuagint in the Codex Alexandrinus. The MSS. give us no help. There is probably a mistake here, which, from the similarity of the letters, might easily occur. The words, as they now stand in the

Hebrew text, are **מאה ואשרים** meah veesrim, one hundred and twenty. But probably the letters in **מאה** mead, a hundred, are transposed for **אמה** ammah, a cubit, if, therefore, the **א** aleph be placed after the **מ** mem, then the word will be **מאה** meah one hundred; if before it the word will be **אמה** ammah, a cubit; therefore **אמה עשרים** ammah esrim will be twenty cubits; and thus the Syriac, Arabic, and Septuagint appear to have read. This will bring it within the proportion of the other measures, but a hundred and twenty seems too great a height.

**Verse 6. Gold of Parvaim.** We know not what this place was; some think it is the same as Sepharvaim, a place in Armenia or Media, conquered by the king of Assyria, 2 Kings 17:24, etc. Others, that it is Taprobane, now the island of Ceylon, which Bochart derives from taph, signifying the border, and Parvan, i.e., the coast of Parvan. The rabbins say that it was gold of a blood-red color, and had its name from **פרים** parim, heifers, being like to bullocks' blood.

The Vulgate translates the passage thus: Stravit quoque pavementum templi pretiosissimo marmore, decore multo; porro aurum erat probatissimum; "And he made the pavement of the temple of the most precious marble; and moreover the gold was of the best quality," etc.

**Verse 9. The weight of the nails was fifty shekels** Bolts must be here intended, as it should be preposterous to suppose nails of nearly two pounds' weight.

**The supper chambers** Probably the ceiling is meant.

**Verse 17. He reared up the pillars** "The name of that on the right hand was Jachin, because the kingdom of the house of David was established; and the name of the left was Boaz, from the name of Boaz the patriarch of the family of Judah, from whom all the kings of the house of Judah have descended." -Targum. See on 1 Kings 7:21; and see the parallel places for other matters contained in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

*The brazen altar, 1. Molten sea, and its supporters, 2-5. The ten lavers, 6. Ten golden candlesticks, 7. Ten tables, the hundred golden basons, and the priests' court, 8-10. The works which Hiram performed, 11-17. Solomon finishes the temple, and its utensils, 18-22.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 3. Under it was the similitude of oxen** In 1 Kings 7:24, instead of oxen, בקרים bekarim, we have knobs, פקעים pekaim; and this last is supposed by able critics to be the reading which ought to be received here. What we call knobs may signify grapes, mushrooms, apples, or some such ornaments placed round about under the turned over lip or brim of this caldron. It is possible that בקרים bekarim, oxen, may be a corruption of פקעים pekaim, grapes, as the פ pe might be mistaken for a ב beth, to which in ancient MSS. it has often a great resemblance, the dot under the top being often faint and indistinct; and the ע ain, on the same account might be mistaken for a ר resh. Thus grapes might be turned into oxen. Houbigant contends that the words in both places are right; but that בקר bakar does not signify ox here, but al large kind of grape, according to its meaning in Arabic: and thus both places will agree. But I do not find that [A] bakar, or [A] bakarat, has any such meaning in Arabic. He was probably misled by the following, in the Arabic Lexicon, Camus, inserted under [A] bakara, both by Giggeius and Golius, [A] aino albikri, ox-eye, which is interpreted Genus uvae nigrae ac praeprandis, incredibilis dulcedinis. In Palaestina autem pro prunis absolute usurpatur. "A species of black grape, very large, and of incredible sweetness. It is used in Palestine for prune or plum." What is called the Damascene plum is doubtless meant; but בקרים bekarim, in the text, can never have this meaning, unless indeed we found it associated with עי ayin, eye, and then עיני בקרים eyney bekarim might, according to the Arabic, be translated plums, grapes, sloes, or such like, especially those of the largest kind,

which in size resemble the eye of an ox. But the criticism of this great man is not solid. The likeliest method of reconciling the two places is supposing a change in the letters, as specified above. The reader will at once see that what are called the oxen, 2 Chronicles 4:3, said to be round about the brim, are widely different from those 2 Chronicles 4:4, by which this molten sea was supported.

**Verse 5. *It-held three thousand baths.*** In 1 Kings 7:26, it is said to hold only two thousand baths. As this book was written after the Babylonish captivity, it is very possible that reference is here made to the Babylonish bath which might have been less than the Jewish. We have already seen that the cubit of Moses, or of the ancient Hebrews, was longer than the Babylonish by one palm; see on 2 Chronicles 3:3. It might be the same with the measures of capacity; so that two thousand of the ancient Jewish baths might have been equal to three thousand of those used after the captivity. The Targum cuts the knot by saying, "It received three thousand baths of dry measure, and held two thousand of liquid measure."

**Verse 6. *He made also ten lavers*** The lavers served to wash the different parts of the victims in; and the molten sea was for the use of the priests. In this they bathed, or drew water from it for their personal purification.

**Verse 8. *A hundred basons of gold*** These were doubtless a sort of paterae or sacrificial spoons, with which they made libations.

**Verse 9. *He made the court of the priests*** This was the inner court.

***And the great court*** This was the outer court, or place for the assembling of the people.

**Verse 16. *Huram his father*** אב, father, is often used in Hebrew to signify a master, inventor, chief operator, and is very probably used here in the former sense by the Chaldee: All these Chiram his master made for King Solomon; or Chiram Abi, or rather Hiram, made for the king.

**Verse 17. *In the clay ground*** See on 1 Kings 7:46. Some suppose that he did not actually cast those instruments at those places, but that he brought the clay from that quarter, as being the most proper for making moulds to cast in.

**Verse 21. *And the flowers, and the lamps*** Probably each branch of the chandelier was made like a plant in flower, and the opening of the flower was either the lamp, or served to support it.

**Verse 22. *The doors-were of gold.*** That is, were overlaid with golden plates, the thickness of which we do not know. THAT every thing in the tabernacle and temple was typical or representative of some excellence of the Gospel dispensation may be readily credited, without going into all the detail produced by the pious author of *Solomon's Temple Spiritualized*. We can see the general reference and the principles of the great design, though we may not be able to make a particular application of the knops, the flowers, the pomegranates, the tongs, and the snuffers, to some Gospel doctrines: such spiritualizing is in most cases weak, silly, religious trifling; being ill calculated to produce respect for Divine revelation.



## CHAPTER 5

*Solomon having finished the temple, brings in the things which his father had consecrated, 1. He assembles the elders and chiefs of Israel and the Levites, in order to bring up the ark from the city of David, 2, 3. They bring it and its vessels; and having offered innumerable sacrifices, place it in the temple, under the wings of the cherubim, 4-10. The Levites, singers, and trumpeters praise God; and his glory descends and fills the house, so that the priests cannot stand to minister, 11-14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *Brought in all the things*** See the note on 1 Kings 7:51.

**Verse 3. *The feast*** “That is, the feast of tabernacles, which was held in the seventh month.” -Targum. See 1 Kings 8:2.

**Verse 9. *They drew out the staves*** As the ark was no longer to be carried about, these were unnecessary.

**Verse 10. *There was nothing in the ark save*** The Chaldee paraphrases thus: “There was nothing put in the ark but the two tables which Moses placed there, after the first had been broken on account of the calf which they made in Horeb, and the two other tables had been confirmed which were written with writing expressed in the TEN WORDS.”

**Verse 11. *When the priests were come out*** After having carried the ark into the holy of holies, before the sacred service had commenced.

**Verse 12. *A hundred and twenty priests*** Cymbals, psalteries, and harps, of any kind, in union with a hundred and twenty trumpets or horns, could not produce much harmony; as to melody, that must have been impossible, as the noise was too great.

**Verse 13. *For he is good*** This was either the whole of the song, or the burden of each verse. The Hebrew is very short:—

כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו

*Ki tob, ki leolam chasdo.*

*For he is good; for his mercy is endless.*

**Verse 14. *The priests could not stand*** What a proof of the being of God, and of the Divine presence! What must those holy men have felt at this time!

## CHAPTER 6

*Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1-42.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1. *The Lord hath said that he would dwell*** Solomon, seeing the cloud descend and fill the house, immediately took for granted that the Lord had accepted the place, and was now present. What occurred now was precisely the same with what took place when Moses reared the tabernacle in the wilderness; see Exodus 40:34, 35: A cloud covered the tent-and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent-because the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

The Chaldee paraphrases thus: "Then said Solomon, It has pleased God to place his majesty in the city of Jerusalem, in the house of the sanctuary which I have built to the name of his WORD, and he hath placed a dark cloud before him."

**Verse 10. *For the name of the Lord*** "For the name of the WORD of the Lord God of Israel." -Targum.

**Verse 14. *That walk before thee with all their hearts*** "With all the will of their souls and with all the affection of their hearts." -Targum.

**Verse 18. *But will God in very deed dwell with men*** "But who could have imagined, who could have thought it credible, that God should place his majesty among men dwelling upon earth? Behold, the highest heavens, the middle heavens, and the lowest heavens, cannot bear the glory of thy majesty, (for thou art the God who sustainest all the heavens, and the earth, and the deep, and all that is in them,) nor can this house which I have built contain Thee." -Targum.

**Verse 22. *If a man sin against his neighbor*** For the SEVEN cases put here by Solomon in his prayer, see the notes on 1 Kings 8:31-46.

**Verse 36. *For there is no man which sinneth not*** See this case largely considered in the note on 1 Kings 8:46.

**Verse 37. *If they bethink themselves*** “If thy fear should return into their hearts.” -Targum.

The whole of this prayer is amply considered in the parallel place, 1 Kings 8:22-53, where see the notes.

**Verse 41. *Let thy saints rejoice in goodness*** “In the abundance of the tithes and other goods which shall be given to the Levites, as their reward for keeping the ark, and singing before it.” -Jarchi.

**Verse 42. *Turn not away the face of thine anointed*** “At least do me good; and if not for my sake, do it for thy own sake.” -Jarchi.

These two last verses are not in the parallel place in 1 Kings 8:22-53. There are other differences between the two places in this prayer, but they are not of much consequence.

## CHAPTER 7

*Solomon having ended his prayer, the fire of the Lord comes down from heaven and consumes the offerings, 1. The people and the priests see this, and glorify God, and offer sacrifices, 2-4. Solomon offers twenty-two thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep; and the priests and Levites attend in their offices, 5, 6. He keeps the feast seven days, and the dedication of the altar seven days, and dismisses the people, 7-11. The Lord appears unto him by night, and assures him that he has heard his prayer, 12-16; promises him and his posterity a perpetual government, if they be obedient, 17, 18; but utter destruction should they disobey, and become idolaters, 19-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1. *The fire came down*** The cloud had come down before, now the fire consumes the sacrifice, showing that both the house and the sacrifices were accepted by the Lord.

**Verse 4. *The king and all the people offered sacrifices*** They presented the victims to the priests, and they and the Levites slew them, and sprinkled the blood: or perhaps the people themselves slew them; and, having caught the blood, collected the fat, etc., presented them to the priests to be offered as the law required.

**Verse 5. *Twenty and two thousand oxen, etc.*** The amount of all the victims that had been offered during the seven days of the feast of tabernacles, and the seven days of the feast of the dedication.

**Verse 8. *The entering in of Hamath*** “From the entrance of Antioch to the Nile of Egypt.” -Targum.

**Verse 10. *On the three and twentieth day*** This was the ninth day of the dedication of the temple; but in 1 Kings 8:66 it is called the eighth day. “The meaning is this,” says Jarchi: “he gave them liberty to return on the eighth day, and many of them did then return: and he dismissed the

remainder on the ninth, what is called here the twenty-third, reckoning the fourteen days for the duration of the two feasts; in all, twenty-three.”

The Targum paraphrases this verse thus: “The people departed with a glad heart, for all the good which God had done to David his servant, on whose account the doors of the sanctuary were open and for Solomon his son, because God had heard his prayer, and the majesty of the Lord had rested on the house of the sanctuary and for Israel, his people, because God had favourably accepted their oblations, and the heavenly fire had descended, and, burning on the altar, had devoured their sacrifices.”

**Verse 12. *The Lord appeared to Solomon*** This was a second manifestation; see 1 Kings 9:2-9, and the notes there. The Targum says, “The WORD of the Lord appeared to Solomon.”

**Verse 13. *Or if I send pestilence*** “The angel of death.” -Targum.

**Verse 15. *Now mine eyes shall be open*** It shall be pleasing to me in the sight of my WORD, that I should incline mine ear,” etc. — Targum.

**Verse 18. *There shall not fail thee a man*** This promise was not fulfilled, because the condition was not fulfilled; they forsook God, and he cut them off, and the throne also.

**Verse 20. *Then will I pluck them up by the roots*** How completely has this been fulfilled! not only all the branches of the Jewish political tree have been cut off, but the very roots have been plucked up; so that the day of the Lord’s anger has left them neither root nor branch.

**Verse 21. *Shall be an astonishment*** The manner in which these disobedient people have been destroyed is truly astonishing: no nation was ever so highly favored, and none ever so severely and signally punished.

**Verse 22. *Because they forsook the Lord*** While they cleaved to God, the most powerful enemy could make no impression on them; but when they forsook him, then the weakest and most inconsiderable of their foes harassed, oppressed, and reduced them to bondage and misery. It was by no personal prowess, genuine heroism, or supereminent military tactics, that the Jews were enabled to resist and overcome their enemies; it was by the Divine power alone; for, destitute of this, they were even worse than other men.



## CHAPTER 8

*Solomon's buildings, conquests, and officers, 1-10. He brings Pharaoh's daughter to his new-built palace, 11. His various sacrifices, and arrangement of the priests, Levites, and porters, 12-16. He sends a fleet to Ophir, 17, 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. *At the end of twenty years*** He employed seven years and a half in building the temple, and twelve and a half, or thirteen, in building his own house. — Compare this with 1 Kings 7:1.

**Verse 2. *The cities which Hiram had restored*** See the note on 1 Kings 9:11.

**Verse 3. *Hamath-zobah*** “Emessa, on the river Orontes.” -Calmet.

**Verse 4. *Tadmor*** Palmyra. See the note on 1 Kings 9:18, for an account of this superb city.

**Verse 6. *All the store cities*** See the note on 1 Kings 9:19.

**Verse 9. *But of the children of Israel*** See the note on 1 Kings 9:21.

**Verse 11. *The daughter of Pharaoh*** “And Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, Solomon brought up from the city of David to the palace which he had built for her.” -T.

***Because the places are holy*** Is not this a proof that he considered his wife to be a heathen, and not proper to dwell in a place which had been sanctified? Solomon had not yet departed from the true God.

**Verse 13. *Three times in the year*** These were the three great annual feasts.

**Verse 15. *The commandment of the king*** The institutions of David.



**Verse 17. *Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber*** See the notes on 1 Kings 9:26-28, for conjectures concerning Ezion-geber and Ophir.

**Verse 18. *Knowledge of the sea*** Skilful sailors. Solomon probably bore the expenses and his friend, the Tyrian king, furnished him with expert sailors; for the Jews, at no period of their history, had any skill in maritime affairs, their navigation being confined to the lakes of their own country, from which they could never acquire any nautical skill. The Tyrians, on the contrary, lived on and in the sea.

## CHAPTER 9

*The queen of Sheba visits Solomon, and is sumptuously entertained by him, 1-12. His great riches, 13, 14. He makes targets and shields of beaten gold, and a magnificent ivory throne, and various utensils of gold, 15-20. His navigation to Tarshish, and the commodities brought thence, 21. His magnificence and political connections, 22-28. The writers of his life, 29. He reigns forty years, and is succeeded by his son Rehoboam, 30, 31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. *The queen of Sheba*** See all the particulars of this royal visit distinctly marked and explained in the notes on 1 Kings 10:1-10. The Targum calls her queen of Zemargad.

**Verse 12. *Beside that which she had brought unto the king*** In 1 Kings 10:13 it is stated that Solomon gave her all she asked, besides that which he gave her of his royal bounty. It is not at all likely that he gave her back the presents which she brought to him, and which he had accepted. She had, no doubt, asked for several things which were peculiar to the land of Judea, and would be curiosities in her own kingdom; and besides these, he gave her other valuable presents.

**Verse 14. *The kings of Arabia*** “The kings of Sistevantha.” -Targum.

**Verse 15. *And King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold*** For a more correct valuation of these targets and shields than that in 1 Kings 10:17, see at the end of the chapter. {2 Chronicles 9:29}

**Verse 17. *Made a great throne of ivory*** For a very curious description of the throne of Solomon, see at the end of the chapter. {2 Chronicles 9:29}

**Verse 21. *The king’s ships went to Tarshish*** “Went to Africa.” -Targum.

**Verse 25. *Four thousand stalls for horses*** See the note on 1 Kings 4:26, where the different numbers in these two books are considered. The

Targum, instead of four thousand, has ארבע מאה arba meah, four hundred.

**Verse 29. Nathan the prophet** These books are all lost. See the account of Solomon, his character, and a review of his works, at the end of 1 Kings 11:43.

I. By the kindness of a learned friend, who has made this kind of subjects his particular study, I am able to give a more correct view of the value of the talent of gold and the talent of silver than that which I have quoted 1 Kings 10:17, from Mr. Reynold's State of the Greatest King.

1. To find the equivalent in British standard to an ounce troy of pure gold, valued at eighty shillings, and to a talent of the same which weighs one thousand eight hundred ounces troy.

The ounce contains four hundred and eighty grains, and the guinea weighs one hundred and twenty-nine grains, or five pennyweights and nine grains.

(1) As 129 grains : 21 shillings :: 480, the number of grains in an ounce : 78.1395348s. or 3l. 18s. 1d. 2.69767q.; the equivalent in our silver coin to one ounce of standard gold.

(2) As 78.1395348 shillings, the value of an ounce of standard gold, : 80 shillings, the value of an ounce troy of pure gold, :: 80 shillings : 81.9047619 shillings, the equivalent in British standard to one ounce of pure gold.

Instead of the preceding, the following proportions may be used:—

(1) As 21.5 shillings : 21 shillings :: 80 shillings : 78.1395348 shillings. This multiplied by 1800, the number of troy ounces in a Hebrew talent, gives 140651.16264s. or 7032l. 11s. 1d. 3.8q., the equivalent to one talent of standard gold.

(2) As 21 standard : 21.5 pure :: 80 pure : 81.9047619 standard. This multiplied by 1800 gives 147428.67142s. or 7371l. 8s. 6d. 3.4q., the equivalent to one talent of pure gold.

2. To find the equivalent in British standard to a talent of pure silver, which is valued at four hundred and fifty pounds sterling, or five shillings the ounce troy.

The pound troy is 240 pennyweights; and our silver coin has 18 pennyweights of alloy in the pound. From 240 pennyweights take 18, and there will remain 222 pennyweights, the pure silver in the pound.

Now as 240 pennyweights : 222 pennyweights :: 20 pennyweights, the weight of a crown piece, : 18 1/2 pennyweights, the weight of the pure silver in the crown.

Then, as 18.5 pennyweights : 6 shillings :: 36000, the number of dwts. in a talent, : 9729.729729729729 shillings, or ú486 9s. 8 3/4d., the equivalent in our coin to a talent of pure silver.

Example 1. To find the equivalent in British standard to the one hundred and twenty talents of gold which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon, 2 Chronicles 9:9.

147428.57142 s . equivalent to one talent of pure gold,  
120 number of talents [as found above. — 17691428.5704 = ú884, 571 8 s . 6 3/4 d . ,  
the equivalent to 120 talents.

Example 2. To find the equivalent in British standard to Solomon's two hundred targets of beaten gold, each six hundred shekels; and to his three hundred shields, each three hundred shekels, #2 Chronicles 9:15, 16 .

A talent is three thousand shekels; therefore six hundred shekels are one-fifth , and three hundred are one-tenth of a talent. \- 5)147428.57142s. equivalent to one talent.—  
29485.71428 equivalent to one target. 200 the number of targets. —  
2)0)589714|2.856— ú294, 857 2 s . 10 1/4 d . equivalent to 200 targets. One-tenth of a talent is 14742.857142 = one shield. 300 number of shields. —2)0)442285|7.1426 —  
ú221, 142 17 s . 1 1/2 d . = 300 shields.

Example 3. To find the equivalent in British standard to the weight of gold which came to Solomon in one year, independently of what the chapmen and merchants brought him. 147428.57142 s . = one talent. 666 number of talents. — 88457142852 88457142852  
88457142852 — 2)0)9818742|8.56572 — ú4, 909, 371 8 s . 6 3/4 d . equivalent to 666 talents.

Example 4. To find the equivalent in British standard to the hundred thousand talents of gold, and to the million of talents of silver, which were prepared by David for the temple, #1 Chronicles 22:14 . \- THE GOLD

147428.57142 s . = one talent.100000 number of talents — 2|0)1474285714|2 —  
 ú737, 142, 857 2 s . the equivalent.

Or, seven hundred and thirty-seven millions, one hundred and forty-two thousand, eight hundred and fifty-seven pounds, two shillings sterling, for the gold. THE SILVER

9729.729729729 s . = one talent.1000000 number of talents. — 2|0)972972972|9.729  
 — ú486, 486, 486 9 s . 8 1/2 d . the equivalent.

Or, four hundred and eighty-six millions, four hundred and eighty-six thousand, four hundred and eighty-six pounds, nine shillings, and eightpence halfpenny sterling, for the silver.

II. I have referred, in the note on 2 Chronicles 9:17, to a curious account of Solomon's throne, taken from a Persian MS. entitled [P] beet al mukuddus, the Holy House, or Jerusalem. It has already been remarked, in the account of Solomon at the end of 1 Kings 11:43, article 12, that among the oriental writers Solomon is considered, not only as the wisest of all men, but as having supreme command over demons and genii of all kinds; and that he knew the language of beasts and birds, etc.; and therefore the reader need not be surprised if he find, in the following account, Solomon employing preternatural agency in the construction of this celebrated throne.

“This famous throne was the work of the Deev Sukhur; it was called Koukab al Jinna. The beauty of this throne has never been sufficiently described; the following are the particulars:—

“The sides of it were pure gold; the feet, of emeralds and pearls, intermixed with other pearls, each of which was as large as the egg of an ostrich.

“The throne had SEVEN steps; on each side were delineated orchards full of trees, the branches of which were composed of precious stones, representing ripe and unripe fruits.

“On the tops of the trees were to be seen fowls of the most beautiful plumage; particularly the peacock, the etaub, and the kurgus; all these birds were artificially hollowed within, so as occasionally to utter a thousand melodious notes, such as the ears of mortals had never before heard.

“On the FIRST step were delineated vine-branches, having bunches of grapes, composed of various sorts of precious stones; fashioned in such a

manner as to represent the different colors of purple, violet, green, and red, so as to exhibit the appearance of real fruit.

“On the SECOND step, on each side of the throne, were two lions, of massive gold, of terrible aspect, and as large as life.

“The property of this throne was such, that when the prophet Solomon placed his foot upon the FIRST step, all the birds spread their wings, and made a fluttering noise in the air.

“On his touching the SECOND step, the two lions expanded their claws.

“On his reaching the THIRD step, the whole assembly of deevs, peris, and men, repeated the praises of the Deity.

“When he arrived at the FOURTH step, voices were heard addressing him in the following manner: Son of David be grateful for the blessings which the Almighty has bestowed upon thee.

“The same was repeated on his reaching the FIFTH step.

“On his touching the SIXTH step, all the children sang praises.

“On his arrival at the SEVENTH step, the whole throne, with all the birds and other animals, became in motion, and ceased not till he iiiCCC

“Such was the throne of Solomon, the son of David.”

Supposing even this splendid description to be literally true, there is nothing here that could not have been performed by ingenuity and art; nothing that needed the aid of supernatural influence.

## CHAPTER 10

*The people apply to Rehoboam to ease them of their burdens, 1-4. Rejecting the advice of the aged counsellors, and following that of the young men, he gives them an ungracious answer, 5-14. The people are discouraged, and ten tribes revolt, 15-17. They stone Hadoram, who went to collect the tribute; and Rehoboam but barely escapes, 18, 19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1. *Rehoboam went to Shechem*** This chapter is almost word for word the same as 1 Kings 12:1-19, to the notes on which the reader is referred.

**Verse 10. *By little finger shall be thicker*** “My weakness shall be stronger than the might of my father.” -Targum.

**Verse 15. *For the cause was of God*** “For there was an occasion Divinely given.” -Targum.

**Verse 16. *To your tents, O Israel*** “To your cities, O Israel.” -Targum.

***Now, David, see to thine own house.*** “Now, David, rule over the men of thy own house.” -Targum.

**Verse 18. *Stoned him*** When he endeavored to collect the tribute which Solomon had imposed on them. — Jarchi.

**Verse 19. *Israel rebelled*** A few soft words, and the removal of a part of the oppressive taxes, (for they said, Ease thou SOMEWHAT the grievous servitude,) would have secured this people to the state, and prevented the shedding of a sea of human blood, which was the consequence of the separation of this kingdom. Rehoboam was a fool; and through his folly he lost his kingdom. He is not the only example on record: the Stuarts lost the realm of England much in the same way; and, by a different mode of treatment, the House of Brunswick continues to fill the British throne.



May the thread of its fortune, woven by the hand of God, never be undone! and may the current of its power glide on to the latest posterity!

*Talia secla, suis dixerunt, currite, fusis  
Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.*

*VIRG. Ecl. iv., ver. 46.*

*“God’s firm decree, by which this web was spun,  
Shall ever bless the clue, and bid it smoothly run.”*

*Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis Aevum.*

*HORAT. Epist., l. i., c. 2, v. 43.*

*“Still glides the river, and shall ever glide.”  
Amen! Amen!*

## CHAPTER 11

*Rehoboam raises an array, purposing to reduce the ten tribes; but is prevented by Shemaiah the prophet, 1-4. He builds several cities of defense, and fortifies others, 5-12. The priests and Levites being turned out by Jeroboam, come to Rehoboam, 13, 14. Jeroboam's gross idolatry, 15. The pious of the land join with Judah, and strengthen the kingdom of Rehoboam, 16, 17. His wives, concubines, and numerous issue, 18-21. He places his own sons for governors in the different provinces, 22, 23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. *Gathered of the house of Judah*** See this account 1 Kings 12:21-24, and the notes there.

**Verse 5. *And built cities for defense in Judah***. He was obliged to strengthen his frontiers against the encroachments of the men of Israel; and Jeroboam did the same thing on his part to prevent the inroads of Judah. See 1 Kings 12:25.

**Verse 11. *Store of victual*** In these places he laid up stores of provisions, not only to enable them to endure a siege; but also that they might be able, from their situation, to supply desolate places.

**Verse 14. *The Levites left their suburbs*** They and the priests were expelled from their offices by Jeroboam, lest they should turn the hearts of the people to the true God, and then they would revolt to Judah, 1 Kings 12:26; and therefore he established a new worship, and made new gods.

**Verse 15. *And he ordained him priests-for the devils*** שְׂעִירִים seirim, the hairy ones; probably goats: for as the golden calves, or oxen, were in imitation of the Egyptian ox-god, Apis; so they no doubt paid Divine honors to the goat, which we know was an object of religious veneration in Egypt.

**Verse 16. *Such as set their hearts to seek the Lord*** All the truly pious joined him out of every tribe, and the whole tribe of Levi, being deprived of their functions, joined him also. Thus he had Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, and probably a part of Simeon; for he had Etam, which was in that tribe, and the truly religious out of all the other tribes, for they could not bear Jeroboam's idolatry.

**Verse 17. *For three years they walked in the way of David*** During this time he prospered; but for fourteen years after this he and the people were unfaithful to the Lord, except at such intervals as the hand of God's judgments was upon them.

**Verse 18. *Took him Mahalath*** By marrying thus in the family of David, he strengthened his right to the Jewish throne.

**Verse 20. *Maachah the daughter of Absalom*** See the note on 1 Kings 15:10. She is called Michaiiah, the daughter of Uriel, 2 Chronicles 13:2. For this the Targum gives the following reason: "Abijah reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Michaiiah, daughter of Uriel of Gibeatha. She is the same as Michah, the daughter of Absalom; but, because she was an upright woman, her name was changed into the more excellent name Michaiiah, and her fathers name into that of Uriel of Gibeatha, that the name of Absalom might not be remembered."

**Verse 21. *Eighteen wives and threescore concubines*** Bad enough, but not so abandoned as his father. Of these marriages and concubinage the issue was twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters; eighty-eight children in the whole, to the education of the whole of whom he could pay but little attention. Numerous families are often neglected; and children by different women, must be yet in a worse state.

**Verse 22. *Made Abijah-the chief*** Abijah certainly was not the first-born of Rehoboam; but as he loved Maachah more than any of his wives, so he preferred her son, probably through his mother's influence. In Deuteronomy 21:16, this sort of preference is forbidden; but Rehoboam had a sort of precedent in the preference shown by David to Solomon.

**Verse 23. *He dealt wisely*** It was true policy to disperse his own sons through the different provinces who were not likely to form any league with Jeroboam against their father.

*He desired many wives.* He was much addicted to women; yet we do not find that he formed any heathenish alliances of this nature. And as no particulars are given, we do not know how far he indulged himself in this propensity. He probably strengthened his political connections by these means.

## CHAPTER 12

*Rehoboam and his subjects, forsaking the Lord, are delivered into the hands of Shishak, king of Egypt, 1-4. Shemaiah the prophet remonstrates with them, and they humble themselves, and Jerusalem is not destroyed; but Shishak takes away all the treasures, and the golden shields, instead of which Rehoboam makes shields of brass, 5-12. He reigns badly seventeen years, dies, and is succeeded by his son Abijah, 13-16.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1. *He forsook the law of the Lord*** This was after the three years mentioned 2 Chronicles 11:17.

**Verse 2. *Shishak king of Egypt*** Concerning this man, and the motive which led him to attack the Jews, see the note on 1 Kings 14:31.

***Transgressed against the Lord*** “Against the WORD of the Lord.” -Targum.

**Verse 3. *The Lubims*** Supposed to be a people of Libya, adjoining to Egypt; sometimes called Phut in Scripture, as the people are called Lehabim and Ludim.

***The Sukkiims*** The Troglodytes, a people of Egypt on the coast of the Red Sea. They were called Troglodytes, **τρογλοδυται, οι τας τρωγλας οικουντες**, “because they dwelt in caves.” -Hesych. This agrees with what Pliny says of them, Troglodytae specus excavant, haec illis domus; “The Troglodytes dig themselves caves; and these serve them for houses.” This is not very different from the import of the original name **סכיים** Sukkiyim, from **סכה** sachah, to cover or overspread; (hence **סוך** such, a tabernacle;) the people who were covered (emphatically) under the earth. The Septuagint translate by the word **τρογλοδυται**, Troglodytes.

***The Ethiopians.*** **כושים** Cushim. Various people were called by this name, particularly a people bordering on the northern coast of the Red Sea;

but these are supposed to have come from a country of that name on the south of Egypt.

**Verse 6. *Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves*** This is not mentioned in the parallel place, 1 Kings 14:25-29: this was the sole reason why Jerusalem was not at this time totally destroyed, and the house of David entirely cut off; for they were totally incapable of defending themselves against this innumerable host.

**Verse 8. *They shall be his servants*** They shall be preserved, and serve their enemies, that they may see the difference between the service of God and that of man. While they were pious, they found the service of the Lord to be perfect freedom; when they forsook the Lord, they found the fruit to be perfect bondage. A sinful life is both expensive and painful.

**Verse 9. *Took away the treasures*** Such a booty as never had before, nor has since, come into the hand of man.

***The shields of gold*** These shields were the mark of the king's body-guard: it was in imitation of this Eastern magnificence that Alexander constituted his Argyraspides, adorned with the spoils taken from Darius. See Quintus Curtius, lib. viii., c. 5, et alibi.

**Verse 13. *Was one and forty years old*** Houbigant thinks he was but sixteen years old when he began to reign; and brings many and forcible arguments to prove that the number forty-one must be a mistake. That he was young when he came to the throne, is evident from his consulting the young men that were brought up with him, 2 Chronicles 10:8, 10. They were young men then; and if he was brought up with them, he must have been young then also. Besides, Abijah, in his speech to Jeroboam, 2 Chronicles 13:7, says that at the time Rehoboam came to the throne he was tender-hearted, and therefore could not withstand the children of Belial raised up against him by Jeroboam: but surely at that time no man could be reputed young and tender-hearted-quite devoid of experience, who was above forty years of age. Besides, if this reading were allowed, it would prove that he was born before his father Solomon began to reign, for Solomon reigned only forty years, and Rehoboam immediately succeeded him.

**Verse 15. Concerning genealogies** “In the book of the genealogy of the family of David.” -Targum.

**Verse 16. Abijah his son** Concerning the many varieties in this king’s name, see the note on 1 Kings 14:31.

## CHAPTER 13

*Abijah begins to reign over Judah, and has war with Jeroboam, 1-3. His speech from Mount Zemaraim to Jeroboam, before the commencement of hostilities, 4-12. While thus engaged, Jeroboam despatches some troops which come on the rear of Abijah's army, 13. Perceiving this, they cry unto the Lord, and the Israelites are defeated with the loss of five hundred thousand men, 14-18. Abijah retakes several cities from Jeroboam, who is smitten by the Lord, and dies, 19, 20. Abijah's marriages and issue, 21, 22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 2. *His mother's name-was Michaiiah*** See on 2 Chronicles 11:20.

**Verse 3. *Abijah set the battle in array*** The numbers in this verse and in the seventeenth seem almost incredible. Abijah's army consisted of four hundred thousand effective men; that of Jeroboam consisted of eight hundred thousand; and the slain of Jeroboam's army were five hundred thousand. Now it is very possible that there is a cipher too much in all these numbers, and that they should stand thus: Abijah's army, forty thousand; Jeroboam's eighty thousand; the slain, fifty thousand. Calmet, who defends the common reading, allows that the Venice edition of the Vulgate, in 1478; another, in 1489; that of Nuremberg, in 1521; that of Basil, by Froben, in 1538; that of Robert Stevens, in 1546; and many others, have the smaller numbers. Dr. Kennicott says: "On a particular collation of the Vulgate version, it appears that the number of chosen men here slain, which Pope Clement's edition in 1592 determines to be five hundred thousand, the edition of Pope Sixtus, printed two years before, determined to be only fifty thousand; and the two preceding numbers, in the edition of Sixtus, are forty thousand and eighty thousand. As to different printed editions, out of fifty-two, from the year 1462 to 1592, thirty-one contain the less number. And out of fifty-one MSS. twenty-three in the Bodleian library, four in that of Dean Aldrich, and two



in that of Exeter College, contain the less number, or else are corrupted irregularly, varying only one or two numbers.”

This examination was made by Dr. Kennicott before he had finished his collation of Hebrew MSS., and before Deuteronomy Rossi had published his *Variae Lectiones Veteris Testamenti*; but from these works we find little help, as far as the Hebrew MSS. are concerned. One Hebrew MS., instead of **ארבע מאות אלף**

OCTOGINTA milia virorum; “With him Abia entered into battle; and he had of the most warlike and choice men forty thousand; and Jeroboam raised an army against him of eighty thousand men.”

And in ver. 17: Et corruerunt vulnerati ex Israel, QUINQUAGINTA milia virorum fortium; “And there fell down wounded fifty thousand stout men of Israel.”

In the Glossa Ordinaria, by Strabo Fuldensis, we have forty thousand and eighty thousand in the two first instances, and five hundred thousand in the last. — Bib. Sacr. vol. ii., Antv. 1634.

In six ancient MSS. of my own, marked A, B, C, D, E, F. the text stands thus:—

A. — Cumque inisset Abia certamen, et haberet bellicosissimos viros, et electorum XL. MIL. Jeroboam instruxit contra aciem LXXX. MIL.

And in ver. 17: Et corruerunt vulnerati ex Israel L. MIL. virorum fortium. Here we have forty thousand for the army of Abijah, and eighty thousand for that of Jeroboam, and FIFTY thousand for the slain of the latter.

B. — QUADRAGINTA milia,  
 OCTOGINTA milia,  
 FORTY thousand.  
 EIGHTY thousand.  
 QUINQUAGINTA milia,  
 FIFTY thousand.

The numbers being here expressed in words at full length, there can be no suspicion of mistake.

C. — CCCC milia,  
 DCCC milibus,  
 D milia  
 400 thousand.  
 800 thousand.  
 500 thousand.

This is the same as the Hebrew text, and very distinctly expressed.

D. — xl. m.  
 lxxx. m.  
 l. v. m.  
 40, 000.  
 80, 000.  
 50 and 5000.

This, in the two first numbers, is the same as the others above; but the last is confused, and appears to stand for fifty thousand and five thousand. A later hand has corrected the two first cccc numbers in this MS., placing over the first four CCCC, thus 40., thus changing forty into four hundred; and over the second thus, dccc lxxx., thus changing eighty into eight hundred. Over the latter number, which is evidently a mistake of the scribe, there is no correction.

E. — xl. m.  
 OCTOGINTA m.  
 l. m.  
 40, 000  
 EIGHTY thousand.  
 50, 000.

F. — CCCC. m.  
 DCCC. m.  
 D. m.  
 400, 000.  
 800, 000.  
 600, 000.

This also is the same as the Hebrew.

The reader has now the whole evidence which I have been able to collect before him, and may choose; the smaller numbers appear to be the most correct. Corruptions in the numbers in these historical books we have often had cause to suspect, and to complain of.

**Verse 4. *Stood up upon Mount Zemaraim*** “Which was a mount of the tribe of the house of Ephraim.” -Targum. Jarchi thinks that Abijah went to

the confines of the tribe of Ephraim to attack Jeroboam. It could not be Shomeron, the mount on which Samaria was built in the days of Omri king of Israel, 1 Kings 16:24.

**Verse 5. *By a covenant of salt?*** For ever. “For as the waters of the sea never grow sweet, neither shall the dominion depart from the house of David.” -Targum. See my note on Numbers 18:19.

**Verse 7. *When Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted*** Therefore he could not be forty-one when he came to the throne; see the note on 2 Chronicles 13:3. Children of Belial here signifies men of the most abandoned principles and characters; or men without consideration, education, or brains.

**Verse 9. *A young bullock and seven rams*** He who could provide these for his own consecration was received into the order of this spurious and wicked priesthood. Some think he who could give to Jeroboam a young bullock and seven rams, was thereby received into the priesthood; this being the price for which the priesthood was conferred. The former is most likely.

**Verse 10. *The Lord is our God*** We have not abandoned the Lord; and we still serve him according to his own law.

**Verse 12. *God himself is with us*** Ye have golden calves; we have the living and omnipotent Jehovah.

***With-trumpets to cry alarm against you.*** This was appalling: When the priests sound their trumpets, it will be a proof that the vengeance of the Lord shall speedily descend upon you.

**Verse 13. *But Jeroboam caused an ambushment*** While Abijah was thus employed in reproving them, Jeroboam divided his army privately, and sent a part to take Abijah in the rear; and this must have proved fatal to the Jews, had not the Lord interposed.

**Verse 17. *Slain-five hundred thousand chosen men.*** Query, fifty thousand? This was a great slaughter: see the note on 2 Chronicles 13:3, where all these numbers are supposed to be overcharged.

**Verse 18. *Judah prevailed, because*** “They depended on the WORD of the God of their fathers.” -T.

**Verse 19. *Beth-el*** “Beth-lehem.” -Targum.

***Jeshanah*** We know not where these towns lay.

**Verse 20. *The Lord struck him, and he died.*** Who died? Abijah or Jeroboam? Some think it was Jeroboam; some, that it was Abijah. Both rabbins and Christians are divided on this point; nor is it yet settled. The prevailing opinion is that Jeroboam is meant, who was struck then with that disease of which he died about two years after; for he did not die till two years after Abijah: see 1 Kings 14:20; 15:9. It seems as if Jeroboam was meant, not Abijah.

**Verse 21. *Married fourteen wives*** Probably he made alliances with the neighboring powers, by taking their daughters to him for wives.

**Verse 22. *Written in the story*** במדרש bemitdrash, “in the commentary;” this, as far as I recollect, is the first place where a midrash or commentary is mentioned. The margin is right.

***His ways, and his sayings*** The commentary of the prophet Iddo is lost. What his sayings were we cannot tell; but from the specimen in this chapter, he appears to have been a very able speaker, and one who knew well how to make the best use of his argument.

## CHAPTER 14

*Asa succeeds his father Abijah, reigns piously, and has peace for ten years, 1. He makes a great reformation in Judah, and builds cities of defense, 2-7. His military strength, 8. He is attacked by Zerah the Ethiopian, with an immense army; Asa cries to the Lord, attacks the Ethiopians, and gives them a total overthrow, 9-12. He takes several of their cities, their cattle, etc., and returns to Jerusalem, laden with spoils, 13-15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 1. *The land was quiet ten years.*** Calmet thinks these years should be counted from the fifth to the fifteenth of Asa's reign.

**Verse 2. *Did that which was good*** He attended to what the law required relative to the worship of God. He was no idolater, though, morally speaking, he was not exempt from faults, 1 Kings 15:14. He suppressed idolatry universally, and encouraged the people to worship the true God: see 2 Chronicles 14:3-5.

**Verse 6. *Fenced cities*** To preserve his territories from invasion, and strengthen the frontiers of his kingdom, see 2 Chronicles 14:7.

**Verse 8. *Targets and spears*** Probably targets with the dagger in the center, and javelins for distant fight.

***Bare shields and drew bows*** They were not only archers, but had shield and sword for close fight.

**Verse 9. *Zerah the Ethiopian*** Probably of that Ethiopia which lay on the south of Egypt, near to Libya, and therefore the Libyans are joined with them, 2 Chronicles 16:8.

***A thousand thousand*** If this people had come from any great distance, they could not have had forage for such an immense army.

**Verse 11. *Whether with many*** The same sentiment as that uttered by Jonathan, 1 Samuel 14:6, when he attacked the garrison of the Philistines.

***O Lord our God-we rest on thee*** “Help us, O Lord our God; because we depend on thy WORD, and in the name of thy WORD we come against this great host.” -Targum.

**Verse 14. *There was-much spoil in them.*** These cities being on the rear of this vast army, they had laid up much forage in them; and to get this the Jews overthrew the whole.

**Verse 15. *Tents of cattle*** Those which had carried the baggage of the great army, and which they had left in such places as abounded with pasture. Perhaps sheepfolds, enclosures for camels, mules, etc., may also be intended. The discomfiture was great, because God fought for the people; and the spoil was immense, because the multitude was prodigious, indeed almost incredible, a million of men in one place is almost too much for the mind to conceive, but there may be some mistake in the numerals: it is evident from the whole account that the number was vast and the spoil great.

## CHAPTER 15

*Azariah's prophecy concerning Israel, and his exhortation to Asa, 1-7. Asa completes the reformation which he had begun, his kingdom is greatly strengthened, and all to people make a solemn covenant with the Lord, 8-15. His treatment of his mother Maachah, 16. He brings into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, 17, 18. And he has no war till the thirty-fifth year of his reign, 19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1. *Azariah the son of Oded*** We know nothing of this prophet but what is related of him here.

**Verse 2. *The Lord is with you, while ye be with him*** This is the settled and eternal purpose of God; to them who seek him he will ever be found propitious, and them alone will he abandon who forsake him. In this verse the unconditional perseverance of the saints has no place: a doctrine which was first the ruin of the human race, Ye shall not die; and ever since the fall, has been the plague and disgrace of the Church of Christ. The Targum is curious: "Hearken to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The WORD of the Lord shall be your helper, while ye walk in his ways. If ye seek doctrine from his presence he will be found of you in times of trouble; but if you cast away his fear, he will abandon you."

**Verse 3. *Now for a long season Israel*** "*Israel hath followed Jeroboam, and they have not worshipped the true God. They have burnt incense to their golden calves; their priestlings* [כומרֵי אִשׁ כumeraiya, *their black, sooty sacrificers*] have burnt perfumes with a strange worship, and have not exercised themselves in the law." -Targum. These priests could not teach, because they had not learnt; and as they had abandoned the law of the Lord, consequently they had no proper matter for instruction.

There is a great diversity of opinions concerning the meaning of this text. Some consider it a prophecy relative to the future state of this people, and



the final destruction of the Jews as to their political existence: others consider it as referring to the state of the people under the reigns of Rehoboam and Abijah, which were happily changed under that of Asa; and this appears to me to be the most natural sense of the words.

**Verse 5. *But great vexations*** Does not our Lord allude to this and the following verse in Matthew 24:6, 7, 9, 13?

**Verse 8. *Renewed the altar*** Dedicated it afresh, or perhaps enlarged it, that more sacrifices might be offered on it than ever before; for it cannot be supposed that this altar had no victims offered on it till the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa, who had previously been so zealous in restoring the Divine worship.

**Verse 9. *And the strangers*** Many out of the different tribes, particularly out of Simeon, Ephraim, and Manasseh, having reflected that the Divine blessing was promised to the house of David, and finding the government of Jeroboam founded in idolatry, would naturally, through a spirit of piety, leave their own country, and go where they might enjoy the worship of the true God.

**Verse 10. *The third month*** At the feast of pentecost which was held on the third month.

**Verse 11. *The spoil which they had brought*** The spoil which they had taken from Zerah and his auxiliaries, 2 Chronicles 14:14, 15.

**Verse 12. *They entered into a covenant*** The covenant consisted of two parts: 1. We will seek the God of our fathers with all our heart, and with all our soul. 2. Whosoever, great or small, man or woman, will not worship the true God, and serve him alone, shall be put to death. Thus no toleration was given to idolatry, so that it must be rooted out: and that this covenant might be properly binding, they confirmed it with an oath; and God accepted them and their services.

**Verse 16. *Concerning Maachah*** See the matter fully explained in the note on 1 Kings 15:13.

The Jews imagine that Maachah repented, and her name became changed into Michaiah, daughter of Uriel of Gibeah; and that this was done that there might be no mention of her former name, lest it should be a reproach

to her: but we have already seen another gloss on this name. See on 2 Chronicles 11:20.

**Verse 17. *The high places were not taken away*** He had totally suppressed or destroyed the idolatry; but some of the places, buildings, or altars, he permitted to remain.

**Verse 18. *The things that his father had dedicated*** As it was a custom to dedicate a part of the spoils taken from an enemy to the service and honor of God, it is natural to suppose that Abijah, having so signally overthrown Jeroboam, (2 Chronicles 13:15-19,) had dedicated a part of the spoils to the Lord; but they had not been brought into the temple till this time.

***Silver, and gold, and vessels.*** The word כֵּלִים *kelim*, which we translate vessels, signifies instruments, utensils, ornaments, etc.

**Verse 19. *The five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa*** Archbishop Usher thinks that this should be counted from the separation of the kingdom, and that this fell on the fifteenth year of Asa's reign. To settle in every respect these chronologies is a most difficult undertaking; and the difficulty does not belong to the sacred books alone, all other chronological tables of all the nations in the world, are in the same predicament. With those of our own history I have often been puzzled, even while I had access to all the archives of the nation. Probably we should read here the five and twentieth year. See the margin, and the note on 1 Kings 15:16.

## CHAPTER 16

*Baasha, king of Israel, begins to build Ramah, to prevent his subjects from having any intercourse with the Jews, 1. Asa hires Ben-hadad, king of Syria, against him; and obliges him to leave off building Ramah, 2-5. Asa and his men carry the stones and timbers of Ramah away, and build therewith Geba and Mizpah, 6. Asa is reproved by Hanani, the seer, for his union with the king of Syria: he is offended with the seer, and puts him in prison, 7-10. Of his acts, 11. He is diseased in his feet, and seeks to physicians and not to God, and dies, 12, 13. His sumptuous funeral, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 1. *The six and thirtieth year*** After the division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; according to Usher. This opinion is followed in our margin; see the note on 1 Kings 15:16, where this subject is farther considered.

Concerning Baasha's building of Ramah, see the note on 1 Kings 15:17.

**Verse 3. *There is a league*** Let there be a treaty, offensive and defensive, between me and thee: see on 1 Kings 15:22.

**Verse 6. *Took all Judah*** See on 1 Kings 15:22.

**Verse 7. *Escaped out of thine hand.*** It is difficult to know what is here intended. Perhaps the Divine providence had intended to give Asa a grand victory over the Syrians, who had always been the inveterate enemies of the Jews; but by this unnecessary and very improper alliance between Asa and Ben-hadad, this purpose of the Divine providence was prevented, and thus the Syrians escaped out of his hands.

**Verse 9. *Therefore-thou shalt have wars.*** And so he had with Israel during the rest of his reign, 1 Kings 15:32.

**Verse 10. *Asa was wroth with the seer*** Instead of humbling himself, and deprecating the displeasure of the Lord, he persecuted his messenger: and having thus laid his impious hands upon the prophet, he appears to have got his heart hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; and then he began to oppress the people, either by unjust imprisonments, or excessive taxations.

**Verse 12. *Diseased in his feet*** He had a strong and long fit of the gout; this is most likely.

***He sought not to the Lord*** “He did not seek discipline from the face of the Lord, but from the physicians.” -Targum.

Are we not taught by this to make prayer and supplication to the Lord in our afflictions, with the expectation that he will heal us when he finds us duly humbled, i.e., when the end is answered for which he sends the affliction?

**Verse 14. *And laid him in the bed*** It is very likely that the body of Asa was burnt; that the bed spoken of here was a funeral pyre, on which much spices and odoriferous woods had been placed; and then they set fire to the whole and consumed the body with the aromatics. Some think the body was not burned, but the aromatics only, in honor of the king.

How the ancients treated the bodies of the illustrious dead we learn from Virgil, in the funeral rites paid to Misenus.

*Nec minus interea Misenum in littore Teucri  
Flebant, et cineri ingrato suprema ferebant.  
Principio pinguem taedis et robore secto  
Ingentem struxere pyram: cui frondibus atris  
Intexunt latera, et ferales ante cupressas  
Constituunt, decorantque super fulgentibus armis, etc.*

AEN. vi. 214.

*“Meanwhile the Trojan troops, with weeping eyes,  
To dead Misenus pay their obsequies.  
First from the ground a lofty pile they rear  
Of pitch trees, oaks, and pines, and unctuous fir.*

*The fabric’s front with cypress twigs they strew,  
And stick the sides with boughs of baleful yew.  
The topmost part his glittering arms adorn:  
Warm waters, then, in brazen caldrons borne*

*Are poured to wash his body joint by joint,  
And fragrant oils the stiffen’d limbs anoint.  
With groans and cries Misenus they deplore:  
Then on a bier, with purple cover’d o’er,*

*The breathless body thus bewail’d they lay,  
And fire the pile (their faces turn’d away.)  
Such reverend rites their fathers used to pay.  
Pure oil and incense on the fire they throw,  
And fat of victims which their friends bestow.*

*These gifts the greedy flames to dust devour,  
Then on the living coals red wine they pour.  
And last the relics by themselves dispose,  
Which in a brazen urn the priests enclose.*

*Old Corineus compass’d thrice the crew,  
And dipp’d an olive branch in holy dew;  
Which thrice he sprinkled round, and thrice aloud  
Invoked the dead, and then dismiss’d the crowd.”*

*DRYDEN.*

All these rites are of Asiatic extraction. Virgil borrows almost every

## CHAPTER 17

*Jehoshaphat succeeds his father Asa, and reigns piously, and is particularly blessed, 14. He establishes an itinerant ministry, for the instruction of the people, through all the cities of Judah, which produces the most beneficial effects, 7-10. The Philistines and Arabians bring him gifts, 11. His greatness, 12, 13. The commanders of his troops, 14-19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 1. *Jehoshaphat-and strengthened himself against Israel*** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah were rivals from the beginning; sometimes one, sometimes the other, prevailed. Asa and Baasha were nearly matched; but, after Baasha's death, Israel was greatly weakened by civil contentions, and Jehoshaphat got the ascendancy. See 1 Kings 16:16-23.

**Verse 2. *The cities of Ephraim*** This conquest from the kingdom of Israel is referred to, 2 Chronicles 15:8; but when it was made we do not know.

**Verse 3. *The Lord was with Jehoshaphat*** "The WORD of the Lord was Jehoshaphat's Helper." -Targum.

**Verse 7. — 9. *To teach in the cities of Judah.*** "To teach the fear of the Lord in the cities of Judah." -Targum.

In these verses we find a remarkable account of an itinerant ministry established by Jehoshaphat; and in this work he employed three classes of men: 1. The princes. 2. The Levites. 3. The priests. We may presume that the princes instructed the people in the nature of the civil law and constitution of the kingdom; the Levites instructed them in every thing that appertained to the temple service, and ritual law; and the priests instructed them in the nature and design of the religion they professed. Thus the nation became thoroughly instructed in their duty to God, to the king, and to each other. They became, therefore, as one man; and against a people thus united, on such principles, no enemy could be successful.

**Verse 8.** See “2 Chronicles 17:7”.

**Verse 9. *Had the book of the law of the Lord with them*** This was their text book: it was the book of God; they taught it as such, and as such the people received it. Its laws were God’s laws, and the people felt their obligation, and their consciences were bound. Thus they were obedient to the laws of the land, on the principle of religion. In this they were encouraged and confirmed by the example of all, both in Church and state. The princes were not only pious, but were teachers of piety; the Levites showed them the worth and excellence of their ritual institutions; and the priests showed them the moral use they were to make of the whole: and thus the people became obedient to God as well as to the king, and kept all the civil ordinances, not merely for the sake of a good king, but for the sake of a good and gracious God. By these means the nation enjoyed peace and prosperity; and all insurrections, seditions, and popular commotions, were prevented. The surrounding nations, perceiving this, saw that there was no hope of subduing such a people, so they made no war with Jehoshaphat, 2 Chronicles 17:10. And they took care not to provoke such a people to fall on them; therefore, it is said, The fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms and lands that were round about Judah. Such an itinerant ministry established in these kingdoms for upwards of fourscore years, teaching the pure, unadulterated doctrines of the Gospel, with the propriety and necessity of obedience to the laws, has been the principal means, in the hand of God, of preserving these lands from those convulsions and revolutions that have ruined and nearly dissolved the European continent. The itinerant ministry, to which this refers, is that which was established in these lands by the late truly reverend, highly learned and cultivated, deeply pious and loyal JOHN WESLEY, A.M., formerly a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, whose followers are known by the name of METHODISTS; a people who are an honor to their country, and a blessing to the government under which they live.

**Verse 11. *The Philistines brought-presents*** They and the Arabians purchased peace with the king of Judah by paying an annual tribute. The Philistines brought silver, and no doubt different kinds of merchandise, The Arabs, whose riches consisted in cattle, brought him flocks in great abundance, principally rams and he-goats.

**Verse 13. *He had much business in the cities*** He kept the people constantly employed; they had wages for their work; and by their labors the empire was both enriched and strengthened.

**Verse 14. *Adnah, the chief*** He was generalissimo of all this host. These are the numbers of the five battalions: under Adnah, three hundred thousand; Jehohanan, two hundred and eighty thousand, Amasiah, two hundred thousand; Eliada, two hundred thousand; Jehozabad, one hundred and eighty thousand; in all, one million one hundred and sixty thousand.

**Verse 19. *These waited on the king*** They were disposable forces, always at the king's command; and were independent of those by which the cities of Judah were garrisoned.

THERE is not a sovereign in Europe or in the world but might read this chapter with advantage. 1. It shows most forcibly that true religion is the basis of the state, and that, wherever it prospers, there the state prospers. 2. It shows also that it is the wisdom of kings to encourage religion with all their power and influence; for if the hearts of the subjects be not bound and influenced by true religion, vain is the application of laws, fines, imprisonments, or corporal punishment of any kind. 3. A religious nation is ever a great nation; it is loved by its friends, it is dreaded by its enemies. 4. It is ever a peaceable and united nation: the blessings of religion, and a wholesome and paternal government, are so fully felt and prized, that all find it their interest to preserve and defend them. Harmony, peace, piety, and strength, are the stability of such times. May Britain know and value them!



## CHAPTER 18

*Jehoshaphat joins affinity with Ahab, king of Israel, 1, 2; who invites him to assist him in the war against the Syrians, to which Jehoshaphat agrees, 3. They consult the prophets concerning the success of the war; and all, except Micaiah, promise Ahab victory, 4-17. Micaiah relates his vision concerning the lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, 18-22. Zedekiah, a false prophet, opposes Micaiah; and Micaiah is put in prison, 23-27. Both the kings go against the Syrians; the confederate armies are defeated, and the king of Israel slain, 28-31.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1.** *Jehoshaphat had riches and honor* The preceding chapter gives ample proof of this.

*Joined affinity with Ahab.* Took his daughter Athalia to be wife to his son Joram.

**Verse 3.** *To Ramoth-gilead* This place belonged to the Israelites, and was now held by the king of Syria.

The whole of this chapter is circumstantially explained in the notes on 1 Kings 22:1-53.

**Verse 9.** *The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat* "Ahab consulted false prophets; but Jehoshaphat sought instruction from the presence of the Lord, and prayed at the entering in of Samaria; and before these all the false prophets prophesied lies." -Targum.

**Verse 20.** *Then there came out a spirit* The Targum gives a strange gloss here: "Then the spirit of Naboth of Jezreel came out from the abode of the righteous, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will deceive him. And the Lord said, By what means? To which he answered, I will be a spirit of false prophecy in the mouth of his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou mayest then. But although the power of deceiving them is given unto thee, nevertheless it will not be lawful for thee to sit among the righteous; for

whosoever shall speak falsely cannot have a mansion among the righteous. Therefore go forth from me, and do as thou hast said.” -Targum.

**Verse 29. *I will disguise myself*** See the note on 1 Kings 22:30.

**Verse 31. *But Jehoshaphat cried out*** “Jehoshaphat cried, and the WORD of the Lord brought him assistance.” -Targum.

**Verse 33. *A certain man drew a bow*** The Targum tells us who it was. “Now, Naaman, the captain of the host of the great king of Syria, drew a bow against him, (that the prophecy of Elijah the Tishbite, and of Micaiah the son of Imla, might be fulfilled,) and smote the king of Israel between the heart and the caul of the liver, through the place where the coat of mail is joined.” See the note on 2 Kings 5:1 for this tradition.

**Verse 34. *Stayed himself up-against the Syrians*** There was a great deal of true personal courage and patriotism in this last act of the king of Israel: he well knew that if his troops found that he was mortally wounded, they would immediately give way, and the battle would not only be lost, but the slaughter would be great in the pursuit; therefore he stayed himself up till the evening, when the termination of the day must necessarily bring the battle to a close: and when this was done, the Israelites found that their king was slain, and so they left the field of battle to their foes. Thus Israel had a great loss, and the Syrians had got a great deliverance. Had it not been for this accident, the Syrians had probably been defeated. See on 1 Kings 22:36.

IN the notes referred to above, the quibbling predictions of false prophets and lying oracles are mentioned, and several instances given; and the whole account of the lying spirit going forth from the Lord to deceive Ahab, particularly considered. See especially the notes as above on 2 Chronicles 18:19, 23, 24.

The reader should never forget a truth so very frequently occurring in the Bible, that God is repeatedly represented as doing what, in the course of his providence, he only permits to be done.

## CHAPTER 19

*Jehoshaphat, on his return from Ramoth-gilead, is met by the prophet Jehu, and reproved, 1-3. He makes a farther reformation in the land, establishing courts of justice, and giving solemn and pertinent directions to the judges, Levites, etc., to do judgement and justice among the people, in the fear of God, 4-11.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 1. *Returned to his house in peace*** That is, in safety, notwithstanding he had been exposed to a danger so imminent, from which only the especial mercy of God could have saved him.

**Verse 2. *Jehu the son of Hanani*** We have met with this prophet before; see the note on 1 Kings 16:7.

***Therefore is wrath upon thee*** That is, Thou deservest to be punished. And who can doubt this, who knows that he did help the ungodly, and did love them that hated Jehovah? And is not the wrath of God upon all those alliances which his people form with the ungodly, whether they be social, matrimonial, commercial, or political?

**Verse 4. *From Beer-sheba to Mount Ephraim*** Before the separation of the ten tribes, in speaking of the extent of the land it was said, From Dan to Beer-sheba; but since that event, the kingdom of Judah was bounded on the south by Beer-sheba, and on the north by the mountains of Ephraim. This shows that Jehoshaphat had gone through all his territories to examine every thing himself, to see that judgment and justice were properly administered among the people.

**Verse 6. *Take heed what ye do*** A very solemn and very necessary caution; judges should feel themselves in the place of God, and judge as those who know they shall be judged for their judgments.

**Verse 8. *And for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem.*** Who were they that returned to Jerusalem? Some suppose that it means Jehoshaphat and his courtiers, who returned to Jerusalem after the expedition mentioned 2 Chronicles 19:4: but if this were so, or if the text spoke of any person returning to Jerusalem, would not לירושלם lirushalem, TO Jerusalem, and not the simple word ירושלם Yerushalem, without the preposition, be used?

Learned men have supposed, with great plausibility, that the word יִשְׁבוּ vaiyashubu, “and they returned,” should be written יוֹשְׁבֵי yoshebey, “the inhabitants,” and that the words should be read, And for the controversies of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. That this was the original reading is very probable from its vestiges in the Vulgate, habitatoribus ejus, “its INHABITANTS;” and in the Septuagint it is found totidem verbis, και κρινειν τους κατοικουντας εν ἱερουσαλημ, And to judge the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

There is a clause in 2 Chronicles 34:9 where we have a similar mistake in our version: And they returned to Jerusalem, וישבו ירושלם where the false keri, or marginal note, directs it, in opposition to common sense and ALL the versions, to be read וישבו and they returned, which our translation has unhappily followed.

**Verse 10. *Between blood and blood*** Cases of man-slaughter or accidental murder, or cases of consanguinity, the settlement of inheritance, family claims, etc.

***Between law and commandment*** Whatsoever concerns the moral precepts, rites, and ceremonies, of the law, or whatsoever belongs to civil affairs.

**Verse 11. *Behold, Amariah*** Here was a two-fold jurisdiction, ecclesiastical and civil: in the ecclesiastical court, Amariah the high-priest was supreme judge, in the civil court, Zebadiah was supreme. To assist both the Levites were a sort of counsellors.

WITHOUT good and wholesome laws, no nation can be prosperous: and vain are the best laws if they be not judiciously and conscientiously administered. The things of GOD and the things of the King should never

be confounded in the administration of justice. Amariah the priest, and Zebadiah the ruler, should ever have their distinct places of jurisdiction.

## CHAPTER 20

*The Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, invade Judah, 1, 2. Jehoshaphat proclaims a fast, and gathers the people together to seek the Lord, 3, 4. His prayer to God, 5-12. Great and small, male and female, seek the Lord, 13. Jahaziel predicts the downfall of their enemies, 14-17. The king, the Levites, and the people take courage; praise and magnify God; and go forth to meet their enemies, 18-21. The enemies are confounded, and destroy each other, 22-24. The men of Judah take the spoil, praise the Lord, and return with joy to Jerusalem, 25-28. The fear of the Lord falls upon all their enemies round about; and the land has rest, 29, 30. Transactions and character of Jehoshaphat, 31-34. He joins with Ahaziah, king of Israel, in building a fleet of ships to go to Tarshish, but they are wrecked at Ezion-geber, 35-37.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 1. Children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites** Here there must be a mistake; surely the Ammonites are the same as the children of Ammon. Our translators have falsified the text by inserting the words “other beside,” which have nothing properly to represent them in the Hebrew. Literally translated, the words are: “And it happened after this, the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them of the Ammonites:” and thus the Vulgate. The Syriac, which the Arabic follows, has felt the difficulty, and translated, Came together with warlike men to fight, etc. The Septuagint have given it another turn: **καὶ μετ’ αὐτῶν ἐκ τῶν μινναίων**, And with them people of the Minaites; which were a people of Arabia Felix near the Red Sea. The Targum has **וְעִמֵּהוֹן מִן עֲדוֹמָאֵי** Ve-immehon min Edomaey, “And with them some of the Edomites.” This is very likely to be the true reading, as we find from 2 Chronicles 20:10, 22, 23, that they procured men from Mount Seir; and these were the Idumeans or Edomites. We should, in my opinion, read the text thus: The children of Moab, and the children of common, and with them some of the Edomites.

**Verse 2. *On this side Syria*** Instead of מֵאַרְם mearam, from Syria, I would read with one of Kennicott's MSS. (89) מֵעֲדוֹם meedom, from Edom, which alteration brings it to truth and does not require the change of half a letter, as it consists in the almost imperceptible difference between אַ resh and אַ daleth. We do not read of any Syrians in this invasion, but we know there were Edomites, or inhabitants of Mount Seir.

***Hazazon-tamar*** "In the wood of palm trees, that is, in Engedi." -Targum. This is the meaning of the word, and it is probable that they lay hid here.

**Verse 3. *Jehoshaphat feared*** He found that he could not possibly stand against such a numerous army, and therefore could not expect to be delivered except by the strong arm of God. To get this assistance, it was necessary to seek it; and to get such extraordinary help, they should seek it in an extraordinary way; hence he proclaimed a universal fast, and all the people came up to Jerusalem to seek the Lord.

**Verse 6. *Jehoshaphat stood*** What an instructive sight was this! The king who proclaimed the fast was foremost to observe it, and was on this occasion the priest of the people; offering in the congregation, without form or any premeditation, one of the most sensible, pious, correct, and as to its composition one of the most elegant prayers ever offered under the Old Testament dispensation.

**Verse 7. *Art not thou our God*** "Hast not thou, by thy WORD, driven out." -Targum.

**Verse 8. *Therein for thy name*** "For the name of thy WORD." -Targum.

**Verse 9. *For thy name is in this house*** "Thy Majesty is in this house." Several of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., with the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic, add נִקְרָא nikra, "is invoked;" Thy name is invoked in this house-here thou dwellest, and here thou art worshipped.

**Verse 11. *They reward us*** Six of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS. add רַעֵה evil: "Behold, they reward us EVIL." This is also the reading of the Targum.

**Verse 12. *Wilt thou not judge them*** That is, Thou wilt inflict deserved punishment upon them.

**Verse 15. *For the battle is not yours, but God's.*** God will not employ you in the discomfiture of this great host; he himself will take the matter in hand, deliver you, and destroy them.

**Verse 17. *For the Lord will be with you.*** “The WORD of the Lord shall be your Helper.” -Targum.

**Verse 20. *Believe in the Lord your God*** “Believe in the WORD of the Lord your God, and believe in his law, and believe in his prophets; and ye shall prosper.” Here the WORD and the revelation are most pointedly distinguished; the Word being used personally.

**Verse 22. *The Lord set ambushments*** “The WORD of the Lord placed snares among the children of Ammon and Moab; and the inhabitants of the mountain of Gibla, who came to fight with Judah; and they were broken to pieces:” so the Targum.

Houbigant translates the place thus: “The Lord set against the children of Ammon and Moab ambushments of those who came from Mount Seir against Judah; and the children of Ammon and Moab were smitten: but they afterwards rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, and utterly destroyed them; who being destroyed, they rose up one against another, and mutually destroyed each other.” This is probably the meaning of these verses. Calmet’s version is not very different.

**Verse 25. *Both riches with the dead bodies*** For פגרים peparim, dead bodies, בגדים begadim, garments, is the reading of eight MSS. in the collections of Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi, and in several ancient editions. None of the versions have dead bodies except the Chaldee. The words might be easily mistaken for each other, as the פּ pe, if a little faint in the under dot might easily pass for a בּ beth; and we know that the רּ resh and דּ daleth, are frequently interchanged and mistaken for each other, both in Hebrew and Syriac. I believe garments to be the true reading; and as to the clause which they stripped off for themselves, it should be understood thus: Which they seized for themselves, etc.

**Verse 26. *Assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah*** “The valley of Benediction;” and so in the latter clause. — Targum.



**Verse 27. *Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them*** He was their leader in all these spiritual, holy, fatiguing, and self-denying exercises. What a noble and persuasive pattern!

**Verse 29. *The Lord fought*** “The WORD of the Lord made war against the enemies of Israel.” -Targum.

**Verse 33. *The high places were not taken away*** The idolatry, as we have seen, was universally suppressed; but some of the places where that worship had been performed were not destroyed. Some of them still remained; and these, to such a fickle people, became the means of idolatry in reigns less propitious to truth and religion.

**Verse 34. *In the book of Jehu*** This is totally lost, though it is evident that it was in being when the books of Chronicles were written.

**Verse 36. *To go to Tarshish*** “In the great sea.” -Targum. By which expression they always meant the Mediterranean Sea.

**Verse 37. *The Lord hath broken, etc.*** “The WORD of the Lord hath broken.” -Targum. Concerning Tarshish, Ezion-geber, and Ophir, and the voyage thither, see the notes on 1 Kings 10:22, and at the end of that chapter, {1 Kings 10:29,} and on 2 Chronicles 9:26-28. The Tarshish here is called by the Chaldee Torsos in the great sea, some place in the Mediterranean. On this subject the reader has, no doubt, already seen a great variety of opinions.

## CHAPTER 21

*Jehoram succeeds his father Jehoshaphat; and commences his reign with the murder of his brethren, and of several of the princes of Israel, 1-5. He walks in the way of Ahab, whose bad daughter, Athaliah, he had married, 6. God remembers his covenant with David, and does not destroy the nation, 7. The Edomites revolt, 8-10. Jehoram restores the high places in the mountains of Judah, and greatly corrupts the morals of the people, 11. A letter comes to him from Elijah, 12-15. The Philistines and Arabians come up against him, pillage his house, and take away his wives, with all his sons except Jehoahaz, 16, 17. He is smitten with an incurable disease in his bowels; of which, in two years, he dies miserably, after a profligate reign of eight years, 18-20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 2.** *And he had brethren—the sons of Jehoshaphat, king of Israel.* Jehoshaphat certainly was not king of Israel, but king of Judah. **ישראל** Yisrael must be a corruption in the text, for **יהודה** Yehudah; which is the reading of the Syriac, Arabic, Septuagint, and Vulgate: the Chaldee, only agrees with the Hebrew text. And the reading of the versions is supported by thirty-eight of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS. The word Judah should therefore be restored to the text.

**Verse 3.** *The kingdom gave he to Jehoram* He made him co-partner with himself in the kingdom about three years before his death; so that he reigned only five years after the death of his father Jehoshaphat. See the notes on 2 Kings 8:16, etc.; and on the same, 2 Chronicles 1:17, where an attempt is made to settle this disturbed chronology.

**Verse 4.** *Slew all his brethren* What a truly diabolic thing is the lust of power! it destroys all the charities of life, and renders those who are under its influence the truest resemblants of the arch fiend. That he might sit the more secure upon his throne, this execrable man imbrues his hands in the blood of his own brothers! There are more instances of this species of

cruelty among bad Asiatic kings than among any other class of men. The history of every country abounds in proofs; even that of our own is not the least barren.

**Verse 6. *He had the daughter of Ahab to wife*** This was Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, who was famous for her impieties and cruelty, as was her most profligate mother. It is likely that she was the principal cause of Jehoram's cruelty and profaneness.

**Verse 7. *To give a light to him*** To give him a descendant.

**Verse 8. *In his days the Edomites revolted*** See on 2 Kings 8:21.

**Verse 11. *To commit fornication*** That is, to serve idols. The Israelites were considered as joined to Jehovah as a woman is joined to her husband: when she associates with other men, this is adultery; when they served other gods, this was called by the same name, it was adultery against Jehovah. This is frequently the only meaning of the terms adultery and fornication in the Scriptures.

**Verse 12. *There came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet*** From 2 Kings 2:11, it is evident that Elijah had been translated in the reign of Jehoshaphat, the father of Jehoram. How then could he send a letter to the son? Some say he sent it from heaven by an angel; others, that by the spirit of prophecy he foresaw this defection of Jehoram, and left the letter with Elisha, to be sent to him when this defection should take place; others say that Elijah is put here for Elisha; and others, that this Elijah was not the same that was translated, but another prophet of the same name. There are others who think that, as Elijah was still in the body, for he did not die, but was translated, he sent this letter from that secret place in which he was hidden by the Almighty. All the versions have Elijah, and all the MSS. the same reading. Dr. Kennicott contends that Elisha was the writer; for Elijah had been taken up to heaven thirteen years before the time of this writing. Our margin says, the letter was written before his assumption, and refers to 2 Kings 2:1.

These are all conjectures; and I could add another to their number, but still we should be where we were. I should adopt the conjecture relative to Elisha, were not every Hebrew MS., and all the Oriental versions, against it; to which may be added, that the author of this book does not once

mention Elisha in any part of his work. It is certainly a possible case that this writing might have been a prediction of Jehoram's impiety and miserable death, delivered in the time of the prophet, and which was now laid before this wicked king for the first time: and by it the prophet, though not among mortals, still continued to speak. I can see no solid reason against this opinion.

**Verse 14. *Will the Lord smite*** "The WORD of the Lord will send a great mortality." -Targum.

**Verse 15. *Until thy bowels fall out*** This must have been occasioned by a violent inflammation: by the same death perished Antiochus Epiphanes, and Herod Agrippa.

**Verse 16. *The Philistines, and-the Arabians*** We have no other account of this war. Though it was a predatory war, yet it appears to have been completely ruinous and destructive. What a general curse fell upon this bad king; in his body, soul, substance, family, and government!

**Verse 17. *Save Jehoahaz the youngest*** This person had at least three names, Jehoahaz, Ahaziah, (2 Chronicles 22:1,) and Azariah, (2 Chronicles 22:6.)

**Verse 18. *The Lord smote him*** "And after all these things the WORD Of the Lord smote his bowels," etc. — Targum.

**Verse 19. *After the end of two years, his bowels fell out*** The Targum seems to intimate that he had a constipation and inflammation in his bowels; and that at last his bowels gushed out.

**No burning** "His people made no burning of aromatic woods for him, as they had done for his forefathers." -Targum. See on 2 Chronicles 16:14.

**Verse 20. *Departed without being desired.*** He was hated while he lived, and neglected when he died; visibly cursed of God, and necessarily execrated by the people whom he had lived only to corrupt and oppress. No annalist is mentioned as having taken the pains to write any account of his vile life. This summary mention of him consigns him to the execration of posterity, and holds in the view of every prudent governor, the rock on which he split and wrecked the state.

## CHAPTER 22

*Ahaziah beans to reign; and reigns wickedly under the counsels of his bad mother, 1-4. He is slain by Jehu, who destroys all the house of Ahab, 5-9. Athaliah destroys all the seed royal of Judah, except Joash, who is hidden by his nurse in the temple six years, 10-12.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22

**Verse 1. *Made Ahaziah his youngest son king*** All the others had been slain by the Arabians, etc.; see the preceding chapter, 2 Chronicles 21:17.

**Verse 2. *Forty and two years old was Ahaziah*** See the note on 2 Kings 8:26. Ahaziah might have been twenty-two years old, according to 2 Kings 8:26, but he could not have been forty-two, as stated here, without being two years older than his own father! See the note there. The Syriac and Arabic have twenty-two, and the Septuagint, in some copies, twenty. And it is very probable that the Hebrew text read so originally; for when numbers were expressed by single letters, it was easy to mistake מ mem, FORTY, for כ caph, TWENTY. And if this book was written by a scribe who used the ancient Hebrew letters, now called the Samaritan, the mistake was still more easy and probable, as the difference between [Samaritan] caph and [Samaritan] mem is very small, and can in many instances be discerned only by an accustomed eye.

The reading in 2 Kings 8:26 is right, and any attempt to reconcile this in Chronicles with that is equally futile and absurd. Both readings cannot be true; is that therefore likely to be genuine that makes the son two years older than the father who begat him? Apage hae nugae!

**Verse 3. *His mother was his counsellor*** Athaliah, the wicked daughter of a wicked parent, and the wicked spouse of an unprincipled king.

**Verse 5. *Went with Jehoram*** See on 2 Kings 8:28.

**Verse 9. *He sought Ahaziah*** See a different account 2 Kings 9:27, and the note there, where the accounts are reconciled.

**Verse 10. *All the seed royal of the house of Judah*** Nothing but the miraculous intervention of the Divine providence could have saved the line of David at this time, and preserved the prophecy relative to the Messiah. The whole truth of that prophecy, and the salvation of the world, appeared to be now suspended on the brittle thread of the life of an infant of a year old, (see 2 Chronicles 24:1,) to destroy whom was the interest of the reigning power! But God can save by few as well as by many. He had purposed, and vain were the counter-exertions of earth and hell.

**Verse 12. *Hid in the house of God*** “In the house of the sanctuary of God.” -Targum. Or, as he says on 2 Chronicles 22:11, קודשא בקודש, bekudash kudeshaiya “in the holy of holies.” To this place Athaliah had no access, therefore Joash lay concealed, he and his affectionate aunt-nurse. — See on 2 Kings 11:1.

## CHAPTER 23

*Jehoiada the priest, after having taken counsel with the captains, Levites, etc., proclaims Joash, and anoints him king, 1-11. Athaliah, endeavoring to prevent it, is slain, 12-15. He makes the people enter into a covenant, that they would serve the Lord, 16. The people break down the temple of Baal, and slay Mattan his priest, 17. Jehoiada makes several alterations, and remodels the kingdom, 18-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 23

**Verse 1.** *And in the seventh year* See on 2 Kings 11:4, etc.

**Verse 9.** *Spears and bucklers* See on 2 Kings 11:10.

**Verse 11.** *God save the king.* May the king live! See on 2 Kings 11:12.

**Verse 14.** *And whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword.* He who takes her part, or endeavors to prevent the present revolution, let him be immediately slain.

**Verse 15.** *Of the horse-gate* See on 2 Kings 11:16.

**Verse 16.** *Made a covenant between him* The high priest was, on this occasion, the representative of GOD; whom both the people and the king must have had in view, through the medium of his priest.

**Verse 17.** *Mattan the priest* The Targum will not prostitute the term priest, but calls him כומר *cumera*, priestling.

**Verse 21.** *The city was quiet* There was no attempt at a counter-revolution. Concerning the coronation of Joash, there is a curious circumstance mentioned by the Targumist on 2 Chronicles 23:11, it is as follows:—

“And they brought forth the son of the king, and put on him the royal crown which David took from the head of the king of the children of Ammon. In it was inserted the precious attracting stone, in which was

engraven and expressed the great and honorable NAME [יהוה] which David had placed there by the Holy Spirit: and it was of the weight of a talent of gold; it was therefore a testimony to the house of David that no king who was not of the seed of David should be able to put it on his head, nor be able to bear its weight. When, therefore, the people saw it placed on the head of Joash, and that he was able to bear this crown, they believed him to be of the seed of David, and immediately constituted him king. Therefore Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, May the king be prosperous in his kingdom!”

The Jews say that this was the crown of the king of the Ammonites; and that it was always worn afterwards by the kings of the house of Judah. See Jarchi on this place.



## CHAPTER 24

*Joash begins to reign when seven years old, and reigns well all the days of Jehoiada the priest, 1-3. He purposes to repair the temple of God; and makes a proclamation that the people should bring in the money prescribed by Moses, 4-9. They all contribute liberally; and the different artificers soon perfect the work, 10-13. The rest of the money is employed to form utensils for the temple, 14. Jehoiada dies, 15, 16. And the people after his death become idolaters, 17, 18. Prophets are sent unto them, 19. And among the rest Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, who testifies against them; and they stone him to death, 20-22. The Syrians come against Jerusalem, and spoil it, 23, 24. Joash is murdered by his own servants, 25, 26. His acts, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 24

**Verse 1. *Joash was seven years old*** As he was hidden six years in the temple, and was but seven when he came to the throne, he could have been but one year old when he was secreted by his aunt; see on 2 Chronicles 22:10.

**Verse 4. *To repair the house of the Lord.*** During the reigns of Joram and Athaliah, the temple of God had been pillaged to enrich that of Baal, and the whole structure permitted to fall into decay; see 2 Chronicles 24:7.

**Verse 5. *Gather of all Israel money*** As the temple was the property of the whole nation, and the services performed in it were for the salvation of the people at large, it was right that each should come forward on an occasion of this kind, and lend a helping hand. This is the first instance of such a general collection for building or repairing a house of God.

***From year to year*** It must have been in a state of great dilapidation, when it required such annual exertions to bring it into a thorough state of repair.

**Verse 6. *The collection-of Moses*** This was the poll-tax, fixed by Moses, of half a shekel, which was levied on every man from twenty years old and upward; and which was considered as a ransom for their souls, that there might be no plague among them. See Exodus 30:12-14.

**Verse 8. *They made a chest*** See the notes on the parallel places, 2 Kings 12:4, etc.

**Verse 16. *They buried him-among the kings*** He had, in fact, been king in Judah; for Joash, who appears to have been a weak man, was always under his tutelage. Jehoiada governed the state in the name of the king; and his being buried among the kings is a proof of the high estimation in which he was held among the people.

**Verse 17. *The princes of Judah-made obeisance to the king*** I believe the Targum has given the true sense of this verse: "After the death of Jehoiada, the great men of Judah came and adored King Joash, and seduced him; and then the king received from them their idols."

**Verse 20. *And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah*** "When he saw the transgression of the king and of the people, burning incense to an idol in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, on the day of expiation; and preventing the priests of the Lord from offering the burnt-offerings, sacrifices, daily oblations, and services, as written in the book of the law of Moses; he stood above the people, and said." -Targum.

**Verse 21. *Stoned him-at the commandment of the king*** What a most wretched and contemptible man was this, who could imbrue his hands in the blood of a prophet of God, and the son of the man who had saved him from being murdered, and raised him to the throne! Alas, alas! Can even kings forget benefits? But when a man falls from God, the devil enters into him; and then he is capable of every species of cruelty.

**Verse 22. *The Lord look upon it, and require it.*** And so he did; for, at the end of that year, the Syrians came against Judah, destroyed all the princes of the people, sent their spoils to Damascus; and Joash, the murderer of the prophet, the son of his benefactor, was himself murdered by his own servants. Here was a most signal display of the Divine retribution.

On the subject of the death of this prophet the reader is requested to refer to the note on Matthew 23:34, 35.

**Verse 26. *These are they that conspired against him*** The two persons here mentioned were certainly not Jews; the mother of one was an Ammonitess, and the mother of the other was a Moabitess. Who their fathers were we know not; they were probably foreigners and aliens. Some suppose that these persons were of the king's chamber, and therefore could have the easiest access to him. It has been, and is still, the folly of kings to have foreigners for their valets and most confidential servants, and they have often been the causes of murders and treacheries of different kinds. Foreigners should be banished from the person of the sovereign by strong and efficient laws: even in this country they have often been the cause of much political wo.

**Verse 27. *The greatness of the burdens laid upon him*** Meaning, probably, the heavy tribute laid upon him by the Syrians; though some think the vast sums amassed for the repairs of the temple are here intended.

**Written in the story** מדרש midrash, the commentary, of the book of Kings. We have met with this before; but these works are all lost, except the extracts found in Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra. These abridgments were the cause of the neglect, and finally of the destruction, of the originals. This has been often the case in works of great consequence. Trogius Pompeius wrote a general history of the world, which he brought down to the reign of Augustus, in forty-four volumes. Justin abridged them into one volume, and the original is lost.

## CHAPTER 25

*Amaziah succeeds his father Joash, and begins his reign well, 1, 2. He slays his father's murderers but spares their children, 3, 4. He reviews and remodels the army, 5; and hires a hundred thousand soldiers out of Israel, whom, on the expostulation of a prophet, he sends home again, without bringing them into active service; at which they are greatly offended, 6-10. He attacks the Syrians, kills ten thousand, and takes ten thousand prisoners, whom he precipitates from the top of a rock, so that they are dashed to pieces, 11, 12. The Israelitish soldiers, sent back, ravage several of the cities of Judah, 13. Amaziah becomes an idolater, 14. Is reprov'd by a prophet, whom he threatens, and obliges to desist, 15, 16. He challenges Joash, king of Israel, 17; who reprov's him by a parable, 18, 19. Not desisting, the armies meet, the Jews are overthrown, and Amaziah taken prisoner by Joash, who ravages the temple, and takes away all the treasures of the king, 20-24. The reign of Amaziah: a conspiracy is formed against him; he flees to Lachish, whither he is pursued and slain; is brought to Jerusalem, and buried with his fathers, 25-28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 25

**Verse 2. *He did that which was right*** He began his reign well, but soon became an idolater, 2 Chronicles 25:14, 15.

**Verse 5. *Gathered Judah together*** He purposed to avenge himself of the Syrians, but wished to know his military strength before he came to a rupture.

**Verse 7. *The Lord is not with Israel*** "The WORD of the Lord is not the helper of the Israelites, nor of the kingdom of the tribe of Ephraim." -Targum.

**Verse 9. *The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.*** Better lose the money than keep the men, for they will be a curse unto thee.

**Verse 10. *They returned home in great anger*** They thought they were insulted, and began to meditate revenge. See the notes on 2 Kings 14:1-20, where almost every circumstance in this chapter is examined and explained.

**Verse 14. *The gods of the children of Seir*** “The idols of the children of Gebal.” -Targum.

**Verse 16. *Art thou made of the king’s counsel?*** How darest thou give advice to, or reprove, a king?

**Verse 18. *The thistle that was in Lebanon*** See the explanation of this 2 Kings 14:9. After reciting this fable, the Targum adds, “Thus hast thou done in the time thou didst send unto me, and didst lead up from the house of Israel a hundred thousand strong warriors for a hundred talents of silver: and after they were sent, thou didst not permit them to go with thee to war, but didst send them back, greatly enraged, so that they spread themselves over the country; and having cut off three thousand, they brought back much spoil.”

**Verse 24. *In the house of God with Obed-edom*** From 1 Chronicles 26:15 we learn that to Obed-edom and his descendants was allotted the keeping of the house of Asuppim or collections for the Divine treasury.

***And-the hostages*** See on 2 Kings 14:14.

**Verse 26. *The rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last*** Says the Targum; “The first, when he walked in the fear of the Lord, the last, when he departed from the right way before the Lord; are they not written,” etc.

**Verse 27. *Made a conspiracy*** He no doubt became very unpopular after having lost the battle with the Israelites; the consequence of which was the dismantling of Jerusalem, and the seizure of the royal treasures, with several other evils. It is likely that the last fifteen years of his reign were greatly embittered: so that, finding the royal city to be no place of safety, he endeavored to secure himself at Lachish; but all in vain, for thither his murderers pursued him; and he who forsook the Lord was forsaken by every friend, perished in his gainsaying, and came to an untimely end.

## CHAPTER 26

*Uzziah, the son of Amaziah, succeeds; and begins his reign piously and prosperously, which continued during the life of Zechariah the prophet, 1-5. He fights successfully against the Philistines, and takes and dismantles some of their chief cities, 6; prevails over the Arabians and Mehunims, 7; and brings the Ammonites under tribute, 8. He fortifies Jerusalem, and builds towers in different parts of the country, and delights in husbandry, 9, 10. An account of his military strength, warlike instruments, and machines, 11-15. He is elated with his prosperity, invades the priest's office, and is smitten with the leprosy, 16-20. He is obliged to abdicate the regal office, and dwell apart from this people, his son Jotham acting as regent, 21. His death and burial, 22, 23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 26

**Verse 1. *The people of Judah took Uzziah*** They all agreed to place this son on his father's throne.

**Verse 2. *He built Eloth*** See the notes on 2 Kings 14:21. This king is called by several different names; see the note on 2 Kings 15:1.

**Verse 5. *In the days of Zechariah*** Who this was we know not, but by the character that is given of him here. He was wise in the visions of God-in giving the true interpretation of Divine prophecies. He was probably the tutor of Uzziah.

**Verse 7. *And God helped him*** "And the WORD of the Lord helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gerar, and the plains of Meun." -Targum. These are supposed to be the Arabs which are called the Meuneons, or Munites, or Meonites.

**Verse 8. *The Ammonites gave gifts*** Paid an annual tribute.

**Verse 10. *Built towers in the desert*** For the defense of his flocks, and his shepherds and husbandmen.

**And in Carmel** Calmet remarks that there were two Carmels in Judea: one in the tribe of Judah, where Nabal lived, and the other on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, near to Kishon; and both fertile in vines.

**He loved husbandry.** This is a perfection in a king: on husbandry every state depends. Let their trade or commerce be what they may, there can be no true national prosperity if agriculture do not prosper; for the king himself is served by the field. When, therefore, the king of a country encourages agriculture, an emulation is excited among his subjects; the science is cultivated; and the earth yields its proper increase; then, should trade and commerce fail, the people cannot be reduced to wretchedness, because there is plenty of bread.

**Verse 14. Shields, and spears** He prepared a vast number of military weapons, that he might have them in readiness to put into the hands of his subjects on any exigency.

**Verse 15. Engines-to shoot arrows and great stones** The Targum says, “He made in Jerusalem ingenious instruments, and little hollow towers, to stand upon the towers and upon the bastions, for the shooting of arrows, and projecting of great stones.”

This is the very first intimation on record of any warlike engines for the attack or defense of besieged places; and this account is long prior to any thing of the kind among either the Greeks or Romans. Previously to such inventions, the besieged could only be starved out, and hence sieges were very long and tedious. Shalmaneser consumed three years before such an inconsiderable place as Samaria, 2 Kings 17:5, 6; Sardanapalus maintained himself in Nineveh for seven years, because the besiegers had no engines proper for the attack and destruction of walls, etc., and it is well known that Troy sustained a siege of ten years, the Greeks not possessing any machine of the kind here referred to. The Jews alone were the inventors of such engines; and the invention took place in the reign of Uzziah, about eight hundred years before the Christian era. It is no wonder that, in consequence of this, his name spread far abroad, and struck terror into his enemies.

**Verse 16. He transgressed against the Lord** “He sinned against the WORD of the Lord his God.” -T.

***Went into the temple to burn incense*** Thus assuming to himself the priest's office. See this whole transaction explained in the notes on 2 Kings 15:5.

**Verse 20. *Because the Lord had smitten him.*** "Because the WORD of the Lord had brought the plague upon him." -T.

**Verse 21. *And dwelt in a several house*** He was separated, because of the infectious nature of his disorder, from all society, domestic, civil, and religious.

***Jotham-was over the king's house*** He became regent of the land; his father being no longer able to perform the functions of the regal office.

**Verse 22. *The rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet-write.*** This work, however, is totally lost; for we have not any history of this king in the writings of Isaiah. He is barely mentioned, Isaiah 1:1; 6:1.

**Verse 23. *They buried him-in the field of the burial*** As he was a leper, he was not permitted to be buried in the common burial-place of the kings; as it was supposed that even a place of sepulture must be defiled by the body of one who had died of this most afflictive and dangerous malady.



## CHAPTER 27

*Jotham succeeds his father Uzziah, and reigns well, 1, 2. His buildings, 3, 4. His successful wars, 5, 6. General account of his acts, reign, and death, 7-9.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 27

**Verse 2. *He entered not into the temple*** He copied his father's conduct as far as it was constitutional; and avoided his transgression. See the preceding chapter.

**Verse 3. *On the wall of Ophel*** The wall, says the Targum, of the interior palace. Ophel was some part of the wall of Jerusalem, that was most pregnable, and therefore Jotham fortified it in a particular manner.

**Verse 4. *Castles and towers.*** These he built for the protection of the country people against marauders.

**Verse 5. *He fought also with-the Ammonites*** We find here that he brought them under a heavy tribute for three years; but whether this was the effect of his prevailing against them, is not so evident. Some think that they paid this tribute for three years, and then revolted; that, in consequence, he attacked them, and their utter subjection was the result.

**Verse 7. *The rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways*** It was in his days, according to 2 Kings 15:37, that Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, began to cut Judah short. See the notes on 2 Kings 15:36, 37.

***Written in the book of the kings, etc.*** There is not so much found in the books of Kings which we have now, as in this place of the Chronicles. In both places we have abridged accounts only: the larger histories have long been lost. The reign of Jotham was properly the last politically prosperous reign among the Jews. Hezekiah and Josiah did much to

preserve the Divine worship; but Judah continued to be cut short, till at last it was wholly ruined.

## CHAPTER 28

*Ahaz succeeds his father Jotham, and reigns wickedly for sixteen years, 1. He restores idolatry in its grossest forms, 2-4; and is delivered into the hands of the kings of Israel and Syria, 5. Pekah slays one hundred and twenty thousand Jews in one day, and carries away captive two hundred thousand of the people, whom, at the instance of Oded the prophet, they restore to liberty, and send home, clothed and fed, 6-15. Ahaz sends to the king of Assyria for help against the Edomites, Philistines, etc., from whom he receives no effectual succor, 16-21. He sins yet more, spoils and shuts up the temple of God, and propagates idolatry throughout the land, 22-25. A reference to his acts, his death, and burial, 26, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 28

**Verse 1.** *Ahaz was twenty years old* For the difficulties in this chronology, see the notes on 2 Kings 16:1.

**Verse 3.** *Burnt his children in the fire* There is a most remarkable addition here in the Chaldee which I shall give at length: "Ahaz burnt his children in the fire; but the WORD of the Lord snatched Hezekiah from among them; for it was manifest before the Lord that the three righteous men, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were to proceed from him; who should deliver up their bodies that they might be cast into a burning fiery furnace, on account of the great and glorious NAME, (יהוה) and from which they should escape. First, Abram escaped from the furnace of fire among the Chaldeans, into which he had been cast by Nimrod, because he would not worship their idols. Secondly, Tamar escaped burning in the house of judgment of Judah, who had said, Bring her out, that she may be burnt. Thirdly, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz escaped from the burning, when Ahaz his father cast him into the valley of the son of Hinnom, on the altars of Tophet. Fourthly, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, escaped from the burning fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Fifthly, Joshua, the son of Josedek the high priest, escaped, when the impious

Nebuchadnezzar had cast him into a burning fiery furnace, with Achaab the son of Kolia, and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, the false prophet. They were consumed by fire; but Joshua the son of Josedek escaped because of his righteousness.”

**Verse 5. *Delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria*** For the better understanding of these passages, the reader is requested to refer to what has been advanced in the notes on the sixteenth chapter of 2 Kings 16:5, etc.

**Verse 6. *A hundred and twenty thousand*** It is very probable that there is a mistake in this number. It is hardly possible that a hundred and twenty thousand men could have been slain in one day; yet all the versions and MSS. agree in this number. The whole people seem to have been given up into the hands of their enemies.

**Verse 9. *But a prophet of the Lord-whose name was Oded*** To this beautiful speech nothing can be added by the best comment; it is simple, humane, pious, and overwhelmingly convincing: no wonder it produced the effect mentioned here. That there was much of humanity in the heads of the children of Ephraim who joined with the prophet on this occasion, the fifteenth verse sufficiently proves. They did not barely dismiss these most unfortunate captives, but they took that very spoil which their victorious army had brought away; and they clothed, fed, shod, and anointed, these distressed people, set the feeblest of them upon asses, and escorted them safely to Jericho. We can scarcely find a parallel to this in the universal history of the wars which savage man has carried on against his fellows, from the foundation of the world.

**Verse 16. *The kings of Assyria to help him.*** Instead of מלכי malchey; KINGS; the Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Chaldee, one MS., and the parallel place, 2 Kings 16:7, have מלך melek, KING, in the singular number. This king was Tiglath-pileser, as we learn from the second book of Kings.

**Verse 21. *But he helped him not.*** He did him no ultimate service. See the note on 2 Kings 16:9.

After ver. 15, the 23d, 24th, and 25th verses are introduced before the 16th, in the Syriac and Arabic, and the 22d verse is wholly wanting in

both, though some of the expressions may be found in the twenty-first verse.

**Verse 23. *He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him***  
 “This passage,” says Mr. Hallet, “greatly surprised me; for the sacred historian himself is here represented as saying, The gods of Damascus had smitten Ahaz. But it is impossible to suppose that an inspired author could say this; for the Scripture everywhere represents the heathen idols as nothing and vanity, and as incapable of doing either good or hurt. All difficulty is avoided if we follow the old Hebrew copies, from which the Greek translation was made, *και ειπεν ο βασιλεις αχαζ, εκζητησω τους θεους δαμασκου τους τυπτοντας με*, And King Ahaz SAID, I WILL SEEK TO THE GODS OF DAMASCUS WHICH HAVE SMITTEN ME; and then it follows, both in Hebrew and Greek, He said moreover, Because the gods of the king of Syria help them; therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. Both the Syriac and Arabic give it a similar turn; and say that Ahaz sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, and said, Ye are my gods and my lords; you will I worship, and to you will I sacrifice.”

**Verse 24. *Shut up the doors*** He caused the Divine worship to be totally suspended; and they continued shut till the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, one of whose first acts was to reopen them, and thus to restore the Divine worship, 2 Chronicles 29:3.

**Verse 27. *The kings of Israel*** It is a common thing for the writer of this

## CHAPTER 29

*Hezekiah's good reign, 1, 2. He opens and repairs the doors of the temple, 3. He assembles and exhorts the priests and Levites, and proposes to renew the covenant with the Lord, 4-11. They all sanctify themselves and cleanse the temple, 12-17. They inform the king of their progress, 18, 19. He collects the rulers of the people: and they offer abundance of sin-offerings, and burnt-offerings, and worship the Lord, 20-30. Every part of the Divine service is arranged, and Hezekiah and all the people rejoice, 31-36.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 29

**Verse 2.** *He did that which was right* See the note on 2 Kings 18:3.

**Verse 8.** *He hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment* He probably refers here chiefly to that dreadful defeat by the Israelites in which a hundred and twenty thousand were slain, and two hundred thousand taken prisoners; see the preceding chapter, 2 Chronicles 28:6, 8.

**Verse 10.** *To make a covenant* To renew the covenant under which the whole people were constantly considered, and of which circumcision was the sign; and the spirit of which was, I will be your God: Ye shall be my people.

**Verse 16.** *And the priests went* The priests and Levites cleansed first the courts both of the priests and of the people. On this labor they spent eight days. Then they cleansed the interior of the temple; but as the Levites had no right to enter the temple, the priests carried all the dirt and rubbish to the porch, whence they were collected by the Levites, carried away, and cast into the brook Kidron; in this work eight days more were occupied, and thus the temple was purified in sixteen days.

**Verse 17.** *On the first day* "They began on the first day of the first month Nisan." -Targum.

**Verse 19. *All the vessels, which King Ahaz*** The Targum says, “All the vessels which King Ahaz had polluted and rendered abominable by strange idols, when he reigned in his transgression against the WORD of the Lord, we have collected and hidden; and others have we prepared to replace them; and they are now before the Lord.”

**Verse 21. *They brought seven bullocks, etc.*** This was more than the law required; see Leviticus 4:13, etc. It ordered one calf or ox for the sins of the people, and one he-goat for the sins of the prince; but Hezekiah here offers many more. And the reason appears sufficiently evident: the law speaks only of sins of ignorance; but here were sins of every kind and every die-idolatry, apostasy from the Divine worship, profanation of the temple, etc., etc. The sin-offerings, we are informed, were offered, first for the KINGDOM-for the transgressions of the king and his family; secondly, for the SANCTUARY, which had been defiled and polluted, and for the priests who had been profane, negligent, and unholy; and, finally, for JUDAH-for the whole mass of the people, who had been led away into every kind of abomination by the above examples.

**Verse 23. *They laid their hands upon them*** That is, they confessed their sin; and as they had by their transgression forfeited their lives, they now offer these animals to die as vicarious offerings, their life being taken for the life of their owners.

**Verse 25. *With cymbals, with psalteries*** Moses had not appointed any musical instruments to be used in the divine worship; there was nothing of the kind under the first tabernacle. The trumpets or horns then used were not for song nor for praise, but as we use bells, i.e., to give notice to the congregation of what they were called to perform, etc. But David did certainly introduce many instruments of music into God’s worship, for which we have already seen he was solemnly reprov’d by the prophet Amos, Amos 6:1-6. Here, however, the author of this book states he had the commandment of the prophet Nathan, and Gad the king’s seer; and this is stated to have been the commandment of the Lord by his prophets: but the Syriac and Arabic give this a different turn-“Hezekiah appointed the Levites in the house of the Lord, with instruments of music, and the sound of harps, and with the HYMNS of DAVID, and the HYMNS of GAD, the king’s prophet, and of NATHAN, the king’s prophet: for David sang the

praises of the Lord his God, as from the mouth of the prophets.” It was by the hand or commandment of the Lord and his prophets that the Levites should praise the Lord; for so the Hebrew text may be understood: and it was by the order of David that so many instruments of music should be introduced into the Divine service. But were it even evident, which it is not, either from this or any other place in the sacred writings, that instruments of music were prescribed by Divine authority under the law, could this be adduced with any semblance of reason, that they ought to be used in Christian worship? No: the whole spirit, soul, and genius of the Christian religion are against this: and those who know the Church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion; and that where they prevail most, there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous baubles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth, for to no such worship are those instruments friendly. See the texts in the margin; also the use of the trumpets in the sanctuary, Numbers 10:2, etc., and the notes there.

**Verse 34.** *They could not flay all the burnt-offerings* Peace-offerings, and such like, the Levites might flay and dress; but the whole burnt-offerings, that is, those which were entirely consumed on the altar, could be touched only by the priests, unless in a case of necessity, such as is mentioned here.

***The Levites were more upright in heart*** The priests seem to have been very backward in this good work; the Levites were more ready to help forward this glorious reformation. Why the former should have been so backward is not easy to tell; but it appears to have been the fact. Indeed, it often happens that the higher orders of the priesthood are less concerned for the prosperity of true religion than the lower. Why is this? They are generally too busy about worldly things, or too much satisfied with secular emoluments. A rich priesthood is not favorable either to the spread or depth of religion. Earthly gratifications are often put in the place of Divine influences: it is almost a miracle to see a very rich man deeply interested in behalf either of his own soul, or the souls of others.



**Verse 36. *And Hezekiah rejoiced*** Both he and the people rejoiced that God had prepared their hearts to bring about so great a reformation in so short a time; for, it is added, the thing was done suddenly. The king's example and influence were here, under God, the grand spring of all those mighty and effectual movements. What amazing power and influence has God lodged with kings! They can sway a whole empire nearly as they please; and when they declare themselves in behalf of religion, they have the people uniformly on their side. Kings, on this very ground, are no indifferent beings; they must be either a great curse or a great blessing to the people whom they govern.

## CHAPTER 30

*Hezekiah invites all Israel and Judah, and writes letters to Ephraim and Manasseh to come up to Jerusalem, and hold a passover to the Lord, 1-4. The posts go out with the king's proclamation from Dan to Beer-sheba, and pass from city to city through the coasts of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun, but are generally mocked in Israel, 5-10. Yet several of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun, humble themselves, and come to Jerusalem, 11. But in Judah they are all of one heart, 12, 13. They take away the idolatrous altars, kill the passover, sprinkle the blood, and, as circumstances will permit, sanctify the people, 14, 15. Many having eaten of the passover, who were not purified according to the law, Hezekiah prays for them; and the Lord accepts his prayer, and heals them, 16-20. Hezekiah exhorts them; and they hold the feast seven additional days, fourteen in all, and the people greatly rejoice, 21-26. The priests and the Levites bless the people, and God accepts their prayers and thanksgivings, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 30

**Verse 1. *Hezekiah sent to all Israel*** It is not easy to find out how this was permitted by the king of Israel; but it is generally allowed that Hoshea, who then reigned over Israel, was one of their best kings. And as the Jews allow that at this time both the golden calves had been carried away by the Assyrians,-that at Dan by Tiglath-pileser, and that at Bethel by Shalmaneser,-the people who chose to worship Jehovah at Jerusalem were freely permitted to do it, and Hezekiah had encouragement to make the proclamation in question.

**Verse 2. *In the second month.*** In Ijar, as they could not celebrate it in Nisan, the fourteenth of which month was the proper time. But as they could not complete the purgation of the temple, till the sixteenth of that month, therefore they were obliged to hold it now, or else adjourn it till the next year, which would have been fatal to that spirit of reformation which had now taken place. The law itself had given permission to those who

were at a distance, and could not attend to the fourteenth of the first month, and to those who were accidentally defiled, and ought not to attend, to celebrate the passover on the fourteenth of the second month; see Numbers 9:10, 11. Hezekiah therefore, and his counsellors, thought that they might extend that to the people at large, because of the delay necessarily occasioned by the cleansing of the temple, which was granted to individuals in such cases as the above, and the result showed that they had not mistaken the mind of the Lord upon the subject.

**Verse 6. *So the posts went*** רָצִיִּים ratsim, the runners or couriers; persons who were usually employed to carry messages; men who were light of foot, and confidential.

**Verse 9. *And will not turn away his face from you*** Well expressed by the Targum: "For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not cause his majesty to ascend up from among you, if ye will return to his fear." The shechinah, of which the Targumist speaks, is the dwelling of the Divine Presence among men, and the visible symbol of that presence.

**Verse 18. *A multitude of the people-had not cleansed themselves*** As there were men from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, they were excusable, because they came from countries that had been wholly devoted to idolatry.

***The good Lord pardon every one*** "The Lord, who is good, have mercy on this people who err." -T.

**Verse 22. *Spake comfortably unto all the Levites*** On such occasions the priests and Levites had great fatigue, and suffered many privations; and therefore had need of that encouragement which this prudent and pious king gave. It is a fine and expressive character given of these men, "They taught the good knowledge of God to the people." This is the great work, or should be so, of every Christian minister. They should convey that knowledge of God to the people by which they may be saved; that is, the good knowledge of the Lord.

**Verse 25. *The strangers that come out of the land of Israel*** That is, the proselytes of the covenant who had embraced Judaism, and had submitted to the rite of circumcision, for none others could be permitted to eat of the passover.

**Verse 26. *Since the time of Solomon -there was not the like in Jerusalem.*** For from that time the ten tribes had been separated from the true worship of God, and now many of them for the first time, especially from Asher, Issachar, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun, joined to celebrate the passover.

**Verse 27. *And their voice was heard*** God accepted the fruits of that pious disposition which himself had infused.

***And their prayer came up*** As the smoke of their sacrifices ascended to the clouds, so did their prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings, ascend to the heavens. The Targum says: "Their prayer came up to the dwelling-place of his holy shechinah, which is in heaven." Israel now appeared to be in a fair way of regaining what they had lost; but alas, how soon were all these bright prospects beclouded for ever!

It is not for the want of holy resolutions and heavenly influences that men are not saved but through their own unsteadiness; they do not persevere, they forget the necessity of continuing in prayer, and thus the Holy Spirit is grieved, departs from them, and leaves them to their own darkness and hardness of heart. When we consider the heavenly influences which many receive who draw back to perdition, and the good fruits which for a time they bore, it is blasphemy to say they had no genuine or saving grace; they had it, they showed it, they trifled with it, sinned against it, continued in their rebellions, and therefore are lost.

## CHAPTER 31

*The people destroy all traces of idolatry throughout Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, 1. Hezekiah reforms the state of religion in general; and the tithes are brought in from all quarters, and proper officers set over them, 2-13. They bring to also the freewill-offerings, and regulate the priests and Levites and their families, according to their genealogies, 14-19. Hezekiah does every thing in sincerity and truth, and is prosperous, 20, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 31

**Verse 1. Brake the images in pieces** This species of reformation was not only carried on through Judah, but they carried it into Israel; whether through a transport of religious zeal, or whether with the consent of Hoshea the Israelitish king, we cannot tell.

**Verse 2. In the gates of the tents of the Lord.** That is, in the temple; for this was the house, tabernacle, tent, and camp, of the Most High.

**Verse 3. The king's portion of his substance for the burnt-offerings** It is conjectured that the Jewish kings, at least from the time of David, furnished the morning and evening sacrifice daily at their own expense, and several others also.

**Verse 5. Brought-the first-fruits** These were principally for the maintenance of the priests and Levites; they brought tithes of all the produce of the field, whether commanded or not, as we see in the instance of honey, which was not to be offered to the Lord, Leviticus 2:11, yet it appears it might be offered to the priests as first-fruits, or in the way of tithes.

**Verse 7. In the third month** "The month Sivan; the seventh, Tisri."  
-Targum.

**The heaps** The vast collections of grain which they had from the tithes over and above their own consumption; see 2 Chronicles 31:10.

**Verse 11. To prepare chambers** To make granaries to lay up this superabundance.

**Verse 12. Shimei-was the next.** He was assistant to Cononiah.

**Verse 15. And Miniamin** Instead of מְנִיָּם, Miniamin, בְּנֵימִן, Benjamin, is the reading of three of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.; and this is the reading of the Vulgate, Syriac, Septuagint, and Arabic.

**Verse 17. From twenty years old** Moses had ordered that the Levites should not begin their labor till they were thirty years of age; but David changed this order, and obliged them to begin at twenty.

**Verse 20. Wrought-good and right and truth** Here is the proper character of a worthy king: he is GOOD, and he does good; he is UPRIGHT, and he acts justly and maintains justice; he is truly RELIGIOUS, and he lives according to that truth which he receives as a revelation from God.

**Verse 21. He did it with all his heart** In every respect he was a thoroughly excellent man, saw his duty to God and to his people, and performed it with becoming zeal and diligence. May God ever send such kings to the nations of the world; and may the people who are blessed with such be duly obedient to them, and thankful to the God who sends them!

## CHAPTER 32

*Sennacherib invades Judea, 1. Hezekiah takes proper measures for the defense of his kingdom, 2-6. His exhortation, 7, 8. Sennacherib sends a blasphemous message to Hezekiah, and to the people, 9-15. His servants rail against God; and he and they blaspheme most grievously, 16-19. Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah cry to God; he answers, and the Assyrians are destroyed, and Sennacherib is slain by his own sons, 20, 21. The Lord is magnified, 22, 23. Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, 24. His ingratitude, 25. His humiliation, 26. His riches, 27-30. His error relative to the Babylonish ambassadors, 31. His acts and death, 32, 33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 32

**Verse 1. *After these things*** God did not permit this pious prince to be disturbed till he had completed the reformation which he had begun.

**Verse 2. *When Hezekiah saw*** This was in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah; and at first the Jewish king bought him off at the great price of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold; and even emptied his own treasures, and spoiled the house of the Lord, to gratify the oppressive avarice of the Assyrian king. See the whole account, 2 Kings 18:13, etc.

**Verse 4. *Stopped all the fountains*** This was prudently done, for without water how could an immense army subsist in an arid country? No doubt the Assyrian army suffered much through this, as a Christian army did eighteen hundred years after this. When the crusaders came, in A.D. 1099, to besiege Jerusalem, the people of the city stopped up the wells, so that the Christian army was reduced to the greatest necessities and distress.

**Verse 5. *Raised it up to the towers*** He built the wall up to the height of the towers, or, having built the wall, he raised towers on it.

**Verse 6. *Set captains of war over the people-in the street of the gate of the city*** That is, the open places at the gate of the city, whither the people came for judgment, etc.

**Verse 7. *There be more with us than with him*** We have more power than they have. (These words he quotes from the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings 6:16.) This was soon proved to be true by the slaughter made by the angel of the Lord in the Assyrian camp.

**Verse 9. *After this did Sennacherib*** Having received the silver and gold mentioned above, he withdrew his army, but shortly after he sent Rab-shakeh with a blasphemous message. This is the fact mentioned here.

**Verse 10. *Thus saith Sennacherib*** See all these circumstances largely explained 2 Kings 18:17-36.

**Verse 17. *Wrote also letters*** See 2 Kings 19:9, 14.

**Verse 21. *The Lord sent an angel*** See 2 Kings 19:36, and the note there.

***House of his god*** Nisroch.

***They that came forth of his own bowels*** His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer.

**Verse 23. *Many brought gifts unto the Lord*** They plainly saw that Jehovah was the protector of the land.

***And presents to Hezekiah*** They saw that God was his friend, and would undertake for him; and they did not wish to have such a man for their enemy.

**Verse 24. *Hezekiah was sick*** See 2 Kings 20:1, etc., and the notes there.

**Verse 25. *Hezekiah rendered not again*** He got into a vain confidence, took pleasure in his riches, and vainly showed them to the messengers of the king of Babylon. See on 2 Kings 20:12, etc.

**Verse 26. *Humbled himself*** Awoke from his sleep, was sorry for his sin, deprecated the wrath of God, and the Divine displeasure was turned away from him.



**Verse 27. Pleasant jewels** כלי חמדה keley chemdah, desirable vessels or utensils.

**Verse 30. The upper watercourse** He made canals to bring the waters of Gihon from the west side of Jerusalem to the west side of the city of David.

**Verse 31. Of the ambassadors** See 2 Kings 20:13, and the observations at the end of that chapter. {2 Kings 20:20}

**Verse 32. The vision of Isaiah** See this prophet, chap. 36 to 39.

**Verse 33. Chiefest of the sepulchres** This respect they paid to him who, since David, had been the best of all their kings.

I shall subjoin a few things from the Targum on this chapter.

Ver. 1. “After these things which Hezekiah did, and their establishment, the Lord appointed by his WORD to bring Sennacherib, king of Assyria,

The destruction of God's enemies, and the support and salvation of the faithful, is in every instance in this Targum attributed to the WORD of the Lord, personally understood. See the note on 2 Chronicles 34:27.

Ver. 24. "In those days was Hezekiah sick near to death; but he prayed before the Lord who spoke to him by his WORD to preserve him and to add to his life fifteen years."

Ver. 31. "The king of Babylon sent, that they might inquire concerning the miracle that had been done in the land; that they might see the two tables of stone which were in the ark of the covenant of the Lord which Moses had placed there with the two tables which he had broken on account of the sin of the calf which they made in Horeb. The WORD of the Lord permitted him to show them these; neither did he suffer for it; that he might try him, and see what was in his heart."

THUS God speaks after the manner of men: he either brings, or permits them to be brought, into such circumstances as shall cause them to show their prevailing propensities; and then warns them against the evils to which they are inclined, after having shown them that they are capable of those evils. To know ourselves, and our own character, is of the utmost importance to our religious growth and perfection. He who does not know where his weakness lies, is not likely to know where his strength lies. Many, by not being fully acquainted with their own character, have been unwatchful and unguarded, and so become an easy prey to their enemies. Know thyself is a lesson which no man can learn but from the Spirit of God.

## CHAPTER 33

*Manasseh reigns fifty-five years, and restores idolatry, pollutes the temple, and practises all kinds of abominations, 1-9. He and the people are warned in vain, 10. He is delivered into the hands of the Assyrians, bound with fetters, and carried to Babylon, 11. He humbles himself, and is restored, 12, 13. He destroys idolatry, and restores the worship of God, 14-16. The people keep the high places, but sacrifice to the Lord on them, 17. His acts, prayer, and death, 18-20. His son Amon succeeds him; and after a wicked idolatrous reign of two years, is slain by his own servants in his own house, 21-24. The people rise up, and slay his murderers, and make Josiah his son king in his stead, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 33

**Verse 1. *Manasseh was twelve years old*** We do not find that he had any godly director; his youth was therefore the more easily seduced. But surely he had a pious education; how then could the principles of it be so soon eradicated?

**Verse 3. *Altars for Baalim*** The SUN and MOON. And made groves, אֲשֵׁרֹת Asheroth, Astarte, VENUS; the host of heaven, all the PLANETS and STARS. These were the general objects of his devotion.

**Verse 5. *He built altars*** See the principal facts in this chapter explained in the notes on 2 Kings 21:1-17.

**Verse 7. *A carved image*** “He set up an image, the likeness of himself, in the house of the sanctuary.” The Targumist supposes he wished to procure himself Divine honors.

**Verse 12. *And when he was in affliction*** Here is a very large addition in the Chaldee: “For the Chaldeans made a brazen mule, pierced full of small holes, and put him within it, and kindled fires all around it; and when he was in this misery, he sought help of all the idols which he had made, but obtained none, for their were of no use. He therefore repented, and prayed

before the Lord his God, and was greatly humbled in the sight of the Lord God of his fathers.”

**Verse 13. *And prayed unto him*** “While he was thus praying, all the presiding angels went away to the gates of prayer in heaven; and shut all the gates of prayer, and all the windows and apertures in heaven, lest that his prayer should be heard. Immediately the compassions of the Creator of the world were moved, whose right hand is stretched out to receive sinners, who are converted to his fear, and break their hearts’ concupiscence by repentance. He made therefore a window and opening in heaven, under the throne of his glory; and having heard his prayer, he favourably received his supplication. And when his WORD had shaken the earth, the mule was burst and he escaped. Then the Spirit went out from between the wings of the cherubim; by which, being inspired through the decree of the WORD of the Lord, he returned to his kingdom in Jerusalem. And then Manasseh knew that it was the Lord God who had done these miracles and signs; and he turned to the Lord with his whole heart, left all his idols, and never served them more.” This long addition gives the Jewish account of those particulars which the sacred writer has passed by: it is curious, though in some sort trifling. The gates of prayer may be considered childish; but in most of those things the ancient rabbins purposely hid deep and important meanings.

**Verse 14. *He built a wall*** This was probably a weak place that he fortified; or a part of the wall which the Assyrians had broken down, which he now rebuilt.

**Verse 15. *He took away the strange gods*** He appears to have done every thing in his power to destroy the idolatry which he had set up, and to restore the pure worship of the true God. His repentance brought forth fruits meet for repentance. How long he was in captivity, and when or by whom he was delivered, we know not. The fact of his restoration is asserted; and we believe it on Divine testimony.

**Verse 17. *The people did sacrifice*** “Nevertheless the people did sacrifice on the high places, but only to the name of the WORD of the Lord their God.” -Targum.

**Verse 18. *The words of the seers that spake to him*** “Which were spoken to him in the name of the WORD of the Lord God of Israel.” -Targum.

**Verse 19. *His prayer also*** What is called the Prayer of Manasseh, king of Judah, when he was holden captive in Babylon, being found among our apocryphal books, I have inserted it at the end of the chapter, without either asserting or thinking that it is the identical prayer which this penitent king used when a captive in Babylon. But, as I have observed in another place, there are many good sentiments in it; and some sinners may find it a proper echo of the distresses of their hearts; I therefore insert it.

***Written among the sayings of the seers.*** “They are written in the words of Chozai.” -Targum. So says the Vulgate. The Syriac has Hunan the prophet; and the Arabic has Saphan the prophet.

**Verse 21. *Amon-reigned two years*** See on 2 Kings 21:19.

**Verse 22. *Sacrificed unto all the carved images*** How astonishing is this! with his father’s example before his eyes, he copies his father’s vices, but not his repentance.

**Verse 23. *Trespassed more and more.*** He appears to have exceeded his father, and would take no warning.

**Verse 24. *His servants conspired against him*** On what account we cannot tell.

**Verse 25. *The people of the land slew all them*** His murder was not a popular act, for the people slew the regicides. They were as prone to idolatry as their king was. We may rest satisfied that idolatry was accompanied with great licentiousness and sensual gratifications else it never, as a mere religious system, could have had any sway in the world.

FOR an explanation of the term groves, 2 Chronicles 23:3, see the observations at the end of 2 Kings 21:26.

I have referred to the prayer attributed to Manasseh, and found in what is called the Apocrypha, just before the first book of Maccabees. It was anciently used as a form of confession in the Christian Church, and is still as such received by the Greek Church. It is as follows:—

“O Lord, Almighty God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed, who hast made heaven and earth, with all the ornament thereof; who hast bound the sea by the word of thy commandment; who hast shut up the deep, and sealed it by thy terrible and glorious name; whom all men fear, and tremble before thy power; for the majesty of thy glory cannot be borne, and thine angry threatening towards sinners is insupportable; but thy merciful promise is unmeasurable and unsearchable; for thou art the most high Lord, of great compassion, long-suffering, very merciful, and repentest of the evils of men. Thou, O Lord, according to thy great goodness, hast promised repentance and forgiveness to them that have sinned against thee, and of thine infinite mercies hast appointed repentance unto sinners, that they may be saved. Thou, therefore, O Lord, that art the God of the just, has not appointed repentance to the just, as to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, which have not sinned against thee; but thou hast appointed repentance unto me that am a sinner: for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. My transgressions, O Lord, are multiplied; my transgressions are multiplied; and I am not worthy to behold and see the height of heaven for the multitude of mine iniquities. I am bowed down with many iron bands, that I cannot lift up mine head, neither have any release; for I have provoked thy wrath, and done evil before thee. I did not thy will, neither kept I thy commandments. I have set up abominations, and have multiplied offenses. Now therefore I bow the knee of mine heart, beseeching thee of grace. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge mine iniquities: wherefore I humbly beseech thee, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and destroy me not in mine iniquities. Be not angry with me for ever, by reserving evil for me; neither condemn me into the lower parts of the earth. For thou art the God, the God of them that repent; and in me thou wilt show all thy goodness: for thou wilt save me, that am unworthy, according to thy great mercy. Therefore I will praise thee for ever all the days of my life: for all the powers of the heavens do praise thee, and thine is the glory for ever and ever. — Amen.

The above translation, which is that in our common Bibles, might be mended; but the piece is scarcely worth the pains.

## CHAPTER 34

*Josiah reigns thirty-one years; destroys idolatry in Judah, as also in Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and even to Naphtali, 1-7. He begins to repair the temple, and collects money for the purpose, and employs workmen, 8-13. Hilkiyah the priest finds the book of the law in the temple, which is read by Shaphan before the king, 14-19. He is greatly troubled, and consults Huldah the prophetess, 20-22. Her exhortation, and message to the king, 23-28. He causes it to be read to the elders of Judah, and they make a covenant with God, 29, 32. Josiah reforms every abomination, and the people serve God all his days, 33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 34

**Verse 2.** *He declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.* He never swerved from God and truth; he never omitted what he knew to be his duty to God and his kingdom; he carried on his reformation with a steady hand; timidity did not prevent him from going far enough; and zeal did not lead him beyond due bounds. He walked in the golden mean, and his moderation was known unto all men. He went neither to the right nor to the left, he looked inward, looked forward, and looked upward. Reader, let the conduct of this pious youth be thy exemplar through life.

**Verse 4.** *The altars of Baalim* How often have these been broken down, and how soon set up again! We see that the religion of a land is as the religion of its king. If the king were idolatrous, up went the altars, on them were placed the statues, and the smoke of incense ascended in ceaseless clouds to the honor of that which is vanity, and nothing to the world; on the other hand, when the king was truly religious, down went the idolatrous altars, broken in pieces were the images, and the sacrificial smoke ascended only to the true God: in all these cases the people were as one man with the king.

**Verse 5.** *He burnt the bones of the priests* כומרִיָא kumeraiya, the kemarim, says the Targum. See this word explained, 2 Kings 23:5.

**Verse 6. *The cities of Manasseh*** Even those who were under the government of the Israelitish king permitted their idols and places of idolatry to be hewn down and destroyed: after the truth was declared and acknowledged, the spade and the axe were employed to complete the reformation.

**Verse 9. *And they returned to Jerusalem.*** Instead of וַיָּשׁוּבוּ vaiyashubu, “they returned,” we should read יוֹשְׁבֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי yoshebey, “the inhabitants;” a reading which is supported by many MSS., printed editions, and all the versions, as well as by necessity and common sense. See the note on 2 Chronicles 19:8, where a similar mistake is rectified.

**Verse 12. *All that could skill of instruments of music*** Did the musicians play on their several instruments to encourage and enliven the workmen? Is not this a probable case from their mention here? If this were really the case, instrumental music was never better applied in any thing that refers to the worship of God. It is fabled of Orpheus, a most celebrated musician, that such was the enchanting harmony of his lyre, that he built the city of Thebes by it: the stones and timbers danced to his melody; and by the power of his harmony rose up, and took their respective places in the different parts of the wall that was to defend the city! This is fable; but as all fable is a representation of truth, where is the truth and fact to which this refers? How long has this question lain unanswered! But have we not the answer now? It is known in general, that the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii were overwhelmed by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, about the seventy-ninth year of the Christian era. It is also known that, in sinking for wells, the workmen of the king of Naples lighted on houses, etc., of those overwhelmed cities; that excavations have been carried on, and are now in the act of being carried on, which are bringing daily to view various utensils, pictures, and books, which have escaped the influence of the burning lava; and that some of those parchment volumes have been unrolled, and facsimiles of them engraved and published; and that our late Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., king of Great Britain, expended considerable sums of money annually in searching for, unrolling, and deciphering those rolls. This I record to his great credit as the lover of science and literature. Now, among the books that have been unrolled and published, is a Greek Treatise on Music, by Philodemus; and here we have the truth represented which lay hidden under the fables of Orpheus and



Amphion. This latter was a skillful harper, who was frequently employed by the Theban workmen to play to them while engaged in their labor, and for which they rewarded him out of the proceeds of that labor. So powerful and pleasing was his music, that they went lightly and comfortably through their work; and time and labor passed on without tedium or fatigue; and the walls and towers were speedily raised. This, by a metaphor, was attributed to the dulcet sounds of his harp; and poetry seized on and embellished it, and mythology incorporated it with her fabulous system. Orpheus is the same. By his skill in music he drew stones and trees after him, i.e., he presided over and encouraged the workmen by his skill in music. Yet how simple and natural is the representation given by this ancient Greek writer of such matters! See Philodemus, Col. viii. and ix. Orpheus, and Amphion, by their music, moved the workmen to diligence and activity, and lessened and alleviated their toil. May we not suppose, then, that skillful musicians among the Levites did exercise their art among the workmen who were employed in the repairs of the house of the Lord? May I be allowed a gentle transition? Is it not the power and harmony of the grace of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, that convert, change, and purify the souls of men, and prepare them for and place them in that part of the house of God, the New Jerusalem? A most beautiful and chaste allusion to this fact and fable is made by an eminent poet, while praying for his own success as a Christian minister, who uses all his skill as a poet and musician for the glory of God:—

*Thy own musician, Lord, inspire,  
And may my consecrated lyre  
Repeat the psalmist's part!*

*His Son and thine reveal in me,  
And fill with sacred melody  
The fibres of my heart.*

*So shall I charm the listening throng,  
And draw the LIVING STONES along  
By Jesus' tuneful name.*

*The living stones shall dance, shall rise,  
And FORM a CITY in the skies,  
The New Jerusalem.*

CHARLES WESLEY.

**Verse 14. *Found a book of the law*** See on 2 Kings 22:8.

**Verse 22. *Huldah the prophetess*** See on 2 Kings 22:14.

**Verse 27. *Because thine heart was tender*** “Because thy heart was melted, and thou hast humbled thyself in the sight of the WORD of the Lord, **מִימְרָא דִּי** meymera daya, when thou didst hear his words, **יַת פִּתְגָמוֹי** yath pithgamoi, against this place,” etc. Here the Targum most evidently distinguishes between **מִימְרָא** meymera, the PERSONAL WORD, and **פִּתְגָם** pithgam, a word spoken or expressed.

**Verse 28. *Gathered to thy grave in peace*** See particularly the note on 2 Kings 22:20.

**Verse 30. *The king went*** See on 2 Kings 23:1.

**Verse 31. *Made a covenant*** See on 2 Kings 23:3. And see the notes on that and the preceding chapter, for the circumstances detailed here.

**Verse 32. *To stand to it.*** It is likely that he caused them all to arise when he read the terms of the covenant, and thus testify their approbation of the covenant itself, and their resolution to observe it faithfully and perseveringly.

## CHAPTER 35

*Josiah celebrates a passover, 1; regulates the courses of the priests; assigns them, the Levites, and the people, their portions; and completes the greatest passover ever celebrated since the days of Solomon, 2-19.*

*Pharaoh Necho passes with his army through Judea, 20. Josiah meets and fights with him at Megiddo, and is mortally wounded, 21-23. He is carried to Jerusalem, where he dies, 24. Jeremiah laments for him, 25. Of his acts and deeds, and where recorded, 26, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 35

**Verse 3. *Put the holy ark in the house*** It is likely that the priests had secured this when they found that the idolatrous kings were determined to destroy every thing that might lead the people to the worship of the true God. And now, as all appears to be well established, the ark is ordered to be put into its own place.

For an ample account of this passover and the reformation that was then made, see on 2 Kings 23:1, etc., and the places marked in the margin.

**Verse 11. *They killed the passover*** The people themselves might slay their own paschal lambs, and then present the blood to the priests, that they might sprinkle it before the altar; and the Levites flayed them, and made them ready for dressing.

**Verse 18. *There was no passover like to that*** “That which distinguished this passover from all the former was,” says Calmet, “the great liberality of Josiah, who distributed to his people a greater number of victims than either David or Solomon had done.”

**Verse 20. *Necho king of Egypt*** Pharaoh the lame, says the Targum.

**Verse 21. *God commanded me to make haste*** The Targum gives a curious turn to this and the following verse: “My idol commanded me to make haste; refrain therefore from me and my idol which is with me, that he

betray thee not. When he heard him mention his idol, he would not go back; and he hearkened not unto the words of Necho, which he spake concerning his idol.” Here is the rabbinical excuse for the conduct of Josiah.

**Verse 24. *The second chariot*** Perhaps this means no more than that they took Josiah out of his own chariot and put him into another, either for secrecy, or because his own had been disabled. The chariot into which he was put might have been that of the officer or aid-de-camp who attended his master to the war. See the note on 2 Kings 22:20.

**Verse 25. *Behold, they are written in the lamentations.*** The Hebrews had poetical compositions for all great and important events, military songs, songs of triumph, epithalamia or marriage odes, funeral elegies, etc. Several of these are preserved in different parts of the historical books of Scripture, and these were generally made by prophets or inspired men. That composed on the tragical end of this good king by Jeremiah is now lost. The Targum says, “Jeremiah bewailed Josiah with a great lamentation; and all the chiefs and matrons sing these lamentations concerning Josiah to the present day, and it was a statute in Israel annually to bewail Josiah. Behold, these are written in the book of Lamentations, which Baruch wrote down from the mouth of Jeremiah.”

**Verse 27. *And his deeds, first and last*** “The former things which he did in his childhood, and the latter things which he did in his youth; and all the judgments which he pronounced from his eighth year, when he came to the kingdom, to his eighteenth, when he was grown up, and began to repair the sanctuary of the LORD; and all that he brought of his substance to the hand of judgment, purging both the house of Israel and Judah from all uncleanness; behold, they are written in the book of the Kings of the house of Israel, and of the house of Judah.” -Targum. These general histories are lost; but in the books of Kings and Chronicles we have the leading facts.

## CHAPTER 36

*Jehoahaz made king on the death of his father Josiah, and reigns only three months, 1, 2. He is dethroned by the king of Egypt, and Jehoiakim his brother made king in his stead, who reigns wickedly eleven years, and is dethroned and led captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, 3-8.*

*Jehoiachin is made king in his stead, and reigns wickedly three months and ten days, and is also led captive to Babylon, 9, 10. Zedekiah begins to reign, and reigns wickedly eleven years, 11, 12. He rebels against Nebuchadnezzar, and he and his people cast all the fear of God behind their backs; the wrath of God comes upon them to the uttermost; their temple us destroyed; and the whole nation is subjugated, and led into captivity, 13-21. Cyrus, king of Persia, makes a proclamation to rebuild the temple of the Lord, 22, 23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 36

**Verse 1. *Took Jehoahaz*** It seems that after Necho had discomfited Josiah, he proceeded immediately against Charchemish, and in the interim, Josiah dying of his wounds, the people made his son king.

**Verse 3. *The king of Egypt put him down*** He now considered Judah to be conquered, and tributary to him and because the people had set up Jehoahaz without his consent, he dethroned him, and put his brother in his place, perhaps for no other reason but to show his supremacy. For other particulars, see the notes on 2 Kings 23:31-35.

**Verse 6. *Came up Nebuchadnezzar*** See the notes on 2 Kings 24:1. Archbishop Usher believes that Jehoiakim remained three years after this tributary to the Chaldeans, and that it is from this period that the seventy years' captivity, predicted by Jeremiah, is to be reckoned.

**Verse 9. *Jehoiachin was eight*** See on 2 Kings 24:6-15.

**Verse 10. *Made Zedekiah-king*** His name was at first Mattaniah, but the king of Babylon changed it to Zedekiah. See 2 Kings 24:17, and the notes there.

**Verse 12. *Did that which was evil*** Was there ever such a set of weak, infatuated men as the Jewish kings in general? They had the fullest evidence that they were only deputies to God Almighty, and that they could not expect to retain the throne any longer than they were faithful to their Lord; and yet with all this conviction they lived wickedly, and endeavored to establish idolatry in the place of the worship of their Maker! After bearing with them long, the Divine mercy gave them up, as their case was utterly hopeless. They sinned till there was no remedy.

**Verse 19. *They burnt the house of God*** Here was an end to the temple; the most superb and costly edifice ever erected by man.

***Brake down the wall of Jerusalem*** So it ceased to be a fortified city.

***Burnt all the palaces*** So it was no longer a dwelling-place for kings or great men.

***Destroyed all the goodly vessels*** Beat up all the silver and gold into masses, keeping only a few of the finest in their own shape. See 2 Chronicles 36:18.

**Verse 21. *To fulfill the word of the Lord*** See Jeremiah 25:9, 12; 26:6, 7; 29:12. For the miserable death of Zedekiah, see 2 Kings 25:4, etc.

**Verse 22. *Now in the first year of Cyrus*** This and the following verse are supposed to have been written by mistake from the book of Ezra, which begins in the same way. The book of the Chronicles, properly speaking, does close with the twenty-first verse, as then the Babylonish captivity commences, and these two verses speak of the transactions of a period seventy years after. This was in the first year of the reign of Cyrus over the empire of the East which is reckoned to be A.M. 3468. But he was king of Persia from the year 3444 or 3445. See Calmet and Usher.

**Verse 23. *The Lord his God be with him*** “Let the WORD of the Lord be his helper, and let him go up.” — Targum. See the notes on the beginning of Ezra. {Ezra 1:1}

THUS ends the history of a people the most fickle, the most ungrateful, and perhaps on the whole the most sinful, that ever existed on the face of the earth. But what a display does all this give of the power, justice, mercy, and long-suffering of the Lord! There was no people like this people, and no God like their God.

### MASORETIC NOTES

The sum of the verses in both books of Chronicles is 1656. Middle verse, 1 Chronicles 27:25. Its Masoretic sections, twenty-five.

Having made particular remarks on every thing which I judged of importance in these and the preceding historical books, and in the course of this work having often found the want of a chronological list of the kings of Israel and Judah, in the consecutive order of their reigns; for the reader's information I have brought all the facts into a synopsis or general view, so that he may see at once the contemporary reigns in those two kingdoms, as well as the leading facts by which their reigns were distinguished. In this table will be seen, at one view, the year of the world; the year before Christ; the year before and after the First Olympiad; the year before and from the building of Rome; and under them the Jewish history, from its first kings till the time in which its regal state was entirely abolished, and both kingdoms led into captivity, never more to arise to any political consequence till they acknowledge the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and take Jesus the Christ, the son and only legitimate heir of David, for their Savior and their Lord. I hope that the table which is here subjoined will be found, in every point of view, both interesting and instructive. A. CLARKE.

MILLBROOK, DECEMBER 7, 1819.

Finished correcting the two books of Chronicles, March 28th, 1828. —  
A. CLARKE.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

OF

## EZRA

AT the conclusion of 2 Kings, and also of the preceding book, 2 Chronicles, we have seen the state of misery and desolation to which the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were reduced through their unparalleled ingratitude to God, and their innumerable backslidings and rebellions. These at last issued in their captivity; the inhabitants of the former country being carried away by the Assyrians, and those of the latter by the Chaldeans. The former never recovered their ancient territories, and were so disposed of by their enemies that they either became amalgamated with the heathen nations, so as to be utterly undistinguishable, or they were transported to some foreign and recluse place of settlement, that the place of their existence, though repeatedly guessed at, has for more than two thousand years been totally unknown.

In mercy to the less polluted inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah, though delivered up into the hands of their enemies, God had promised by his prophet, that at the expiration of seventy years they should be enlarged, and restored to their own country. This prediction was most literally fulfilled; and the books of Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah, inform us how the Divine goodness accomplished this most gracious design, and the movers and agents he employed on the occasion. The writer of the following book was undoubtedly the chief agent under God; and his history, as found in the most authentic writings of the Jews, is too nearly connected with this book, and too important in every point of view, to be passed by. No man has written on this subject with such perspicuity as Dean Prideaux; and from his invaluable work, *The Connected History of the Old and New Testaments*, I shall freely borrow whatever may be best calculated to throw light upon the ensuing history.



“In the beginning of the year 458 before the Christian era, Ezra obtained of King Artaxerxes and his seven counsellors a very ample commission for his return to Jerusalem, with all of his nation that were willing to accompany him thither; giving him full authority there to restore and settle the state, and reform the Church of the Jews, and to regulate and govern both according to their own laws. This extraordinary favor, not being likely to have been obtained but by some more than ordinary means, appears to have been granted by King Artaxerxes to the solicitations of Esther, who, though not at that time advanced to the dignity of his queen, was yet the best beloved of his concubines.

“Ezra was of the descendants of Seraiah, the high priest who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar when he burnt the temple and city of Jerusalem.

“As Ezra was a very holy, so also was he a very learned man, and especially skilled excellently in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; and therefore he is said to have been a very ready scribe in the law of God, for which he was so eminent that Artaxerxes takes particular notice of it in his commission. He began his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, called Nisan, which might fall about the middle of our March; and having halted at the river of Ahava till the rest of his company was come up to him, he there, in a solemn fast, recommended himself and all that were with him to the Divine protection; and then, on the twelfth day, set forward for Jerusalem, they all having spent four months in their journey from Babylon thither. On his arrival he delivered up to the temple the offerings which had been made to it by the king and his nobles, and the rest of the people of Israel that stayed behind; which amounted to a hundred talents of gold, with twenty basons of gold of the value of a thousand darics, and six hundred and fifty talents of silver, with vessels of silver of the weight of a hundred talents more: and then, having communicated his commission to the king’s lieutenants and governors throughout all Syria and Palestine, he betook himself to the executing of the contents of it, whereby he was fully empowered to settle both the Church and the state of the Jews, according to the law of Moses; and to appoint magistrates and judges to punish all such as should be refractory; and that, not only by imprisonment and confiscation of goods, but also with banishment and death, according as their crimes should be found to deserve. And all this power Ezra was invested with, and continued

faithfully to execute, for the space of thirteen years, till Nehemiah arrived with a new commission from the Persian court for the same work. Ezra, having found in the second year of his government (Ezra 9. and 10.) that many of the people had taken strange wives, contrary to the law, and that several of the priests and Levites, as well as the chief men of Judah and Benjamin, had transgressed herein, after he had in fasting and prayer deprecated God's wrath for it, caused proclamation to be made for all the people of Israel that had returned from the captivity to gather themselves together at Jerusalem, under the penalty of excommunication, and forfeiture of all their goods. And when they were met, he made them sensible of their sins, and engaged them in promise and covenant before God, to depart from it by putting away their strange wives, and all such as were born of them, that the seed of Israel might not be polluted with such an undue commixture; and thereon commissioners were appointed to inquire into this matter, and cause every man to do according to the law.

“And they sat down the first day of the tenth month to examine into this matter, and made an end by the first day of the first month; so that in three months' time, that is, in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth months of the Jewish years a thorough reformation was made of this transgression: which three months answer to January, February, and March of our year.

“About this time (Esther 2:21) Bigthan and Jeush, two eunuchs of the palace, entered into a conspiracy against the life of King Artaxerxes. Most likely they were of those who had attended Queen Vashti; and being now out of their offices by the degrading of their mistress, and the advancing of another in her place, took such a disgust at this as to resolve to revenge themselves on the king for it; of which Mordecai, having got the knowledge, made discovery to Queen Esther, and she in Mordecai's name to the king; whereon inquiry being made into the matter, and the whole treason laid open and discovered, the two traitors were both crucified for it, and the history of the whole matter was entered on the public registers and annals of the kingdom.

“Ezra continued in the government of Judea till the end of the year 446; and by virtue of the commission he had from the king, and the powers granted him thereby, he reformed the whole state of the Jewish Church, according to the law of Moses, in which he was excellently learned, and

settled it upon that bottom upon which it afterwards stood till the time of our Savior. The two chief things which he had to do, were to restore the observance of the Jewish law according to the ancient approved usages which had been in practice before the captivity, under the directions of the prophets; and to collect together and set forth a correct edition of the Holy Scriptures; in the performance of both which, the Jews inform us he had the assistance of what they call the Great Synagogue, which they tell us was a convention consisting of one hundred and twenty men, who lived all at the same time under the presidency of Ezra, and assisted him in both of these two works; and among these they name Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

“But the whole conduct of the work, and the glory of accomplishing it, is by the Jews chiefly attributed to him under whose presidency they tell us it was done; and therefore they look upon him as another Moses: for the law, they say, was given by Moses; but it was reviewed and restored by Ezra, after it had in a manner been extinguished and lost in the Babylonish captivity. And therefore they reckon him as the second founder of it: and it is a common opinion among them that he was Malachi the prophet; that he was called Ezra as his proper name, and Malachi, which signifies an angel or messenger, from his office, because he was sent as the angel and messenger of God to restore again the Jewish religion, and establish it in the same manner as it was before the captivity on the foundation of the law and the prophets. And indeed, by virtue of that ample commission which he had from King Artaxerxes, he had an opportunity of doing more herein than any other of his nation; and he executed all the powers thereof to the utmost he was able, for the resettling both of the ecclesiastical and political state of the Jews in the best posture they were then capable of: and from hence his name is in so high esteem and veneration among the Jews, that it is a common saying among their writers, ‘that if the law had not been given by Moses, Ezra was worthy, by whom it should have been given.’ As to the ancient and approved usages of the Jewish Church which had been in practice before the captivity, they had by Joshua and Zerubbabel, with the chief elders, then contemporaries, and by others that after succeeded them, been gathering together from their first return to Jerusalem, as they could be recovered from the memories of the ancients of their nation who had either seen them practiced themselves before the

captivity, or who had been informed concerning them by their parents or others who had lived before them.

“All these, and whatsoever else was pretended to be of the same nature, Ezra brought under review, and, after due examination, allowed such of them as were to be allowed, and settled them by his approbation and authority: they gave birth to what the Jews now call their oral law; for they own a twofold law—the first, the written law, which is recorded in the Holy Scriptures; and the second, the oral law, which they have only by the tradition of their elders. And both these, they say, were given them by Moses from Mount Sinai, of which the former only was committed to writing, and the other delivered down to them from generation to generation by the tradition of the elders; and therefore holding them both to be of the same authority, as having both of them the same Divine original, they think themselves to be bound as much by the latter as the former, or rather much more; for the written law is, they say, in many places, obscure, scanty, and defective, and could be no perfect rule to them without the oral law, which, containing according to them a full, complete, and perfect interpretation of all that is included in the other, supplies all the defects and solves all the difficulties of it; and therefore they observe the written law no otherwise than according as it is explained and expounded by their oral law. And hence it is a common saying among them, ‘that the covenant was made with them, not upon the written law, but upon the oral law;’ and therefore they do in a manner lay aside the former to make room for the latter, and resolve their whole RELIGION into their traditions, in the same manner as the Romanists do theirs, having no farther regard to the written word of God than as it agrees with their traditionary explications of it, but always preferring them thereto, though in many particulars they are quite contradictory to it, which is a corruption that had grown to a great height among them even in our Savior’s time; for he charges them with it, and tells them that they make the word of God of none effect through their traditions; Mark 7:13. But they have done it much more since, professing a greater regard to the latter than the former; and hence it is that we find it so often said in their writings, ‘that the words of the scribes are lovely above the words of the law; that the words of the law are weighty and light, but the words of the scribes are all weighty; that the words of the elders are weightier than the

words of the prophets;’ where, by the words of the scribes and the words of the elders, they mean their traditions, delivered to them by their scribes and elders. And in other places, ‘that the written text is only as water; but the Mishnah and Talmud, in which are contained the traditions, are as wine and hippocras.’ And again, ‘that the written law is only as salt, but the Mishnah and Talmud as pepper and sweet spices.’ And in many other sayings, very common among them, do they express the very high veneration which they bear towards the oral or traditionary law, and the little regard which they have to the written word of God in comparison of it, making nothing of the latter but as expounded by the former; as if the written word were no more than the dead letter, and the traditionary law alone the soul that gives it the whole life and essence.

“And this being what they hold of their traditions, which they call their oral law, the account which they give of its original is as follows: they tell us that ‘at the same time when God gave unto Moses the law in Mount Sinai, he gave unto him also the interpretation of it, commanding him to put the former into writing, but to deliver the other only by word of mouth, to be preserved in the memories of men, and to be transmitted down by them from generation to generation by tradition only; and from hence the former is called the written, and the other the oral, law.’ And to this day all the determinations and dictates of the latter are termed by the Jews ‘Constitutions of Moses from Mount Sinai,’ because they do as firmly believe that he received them all from God in his forty days’ converse with him in that mount, as that he then received the written text itself. That on his return from this converse he brought both of these laws with him, and delivered them unto the people of Israel in this manner: As soon as he was returned to his tent, he called Aaron thither unto him, and first delivered unto him the text, which was to be the written law, and after that the interpretation of it, which was the oral law, in the same order as he received both from God in the mount. Then Aaron arising and seating himself at the right hand of Moses, Eleazar and Ithamar his sons went next in, and both these being taught laws at the feet of the prophet in the same manner as Aaron had been, they also arose and seated themselves, the one on the left hand of Moses, the other on the right hand of Aaron; and then the seventy elders who constituted the Sanhedrin, or great senate of the nation, went in, and being taught by Moses both these laws in the same

manner, they also seated themselves in the tent; and then entered all such of the people as were desirous of knowing the law of God, and were taught in the same manner. After this, Moses withdrawing, Aaron repeated the whole of the law as he had heard it from him, and also withdrew; and then Eleazar and Ithamar repeated the same, and on their withdrawing, the seventy elders made the same repetition to the people then present; so that each of them having heard both these laws repeated to them four times, they all had it thereby fixed in their memories; and that then they dispersed themselves among the whole congregation, and communicated to all the people of Israel what had been thus delivered to them by the prophet of God. That they did put the text into writing, but the interpretation of it they delivered down only by word of mouth to the succeeding generations; that the written text contained the six hundred and thirteen precepts into which they divide the law and the unwritten interpretations, all the manners, ways, and circumstances, that were to be observed in the keeping of them; that after this, towards the end of the fortieth year from their coming up out of the land of Egypt, in the beginning of the eleventh month, (which fell about the beginning of our June,) Moses, calling all the people of Israel together, acquainted them of the approaching time of his death, and therefore ordered that if any of them had forgot ought of what he had delivered to them, they should repair to him, and he would repeat to them what had slipped their memories, and farther explain to them every difficulty and doubt which might arise in their minds concerning what he had taught them of the law of their God; and that hereon they applying to him, all the remaining term of his life, that is, from the said beginning of the eleventh month till the sixth day of the twelfth month, was employed in instructing them in the text, which they call the written law, and in the interpretation of it, which they call the oral law; and that on the said sixth day having delivered unto them thirteen copies of the written law, all copied out with his own hand, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy, one to each of the twelve tribes, to be kept by them throughout their generations, and the thirteenth to the Levites, to be laid up by them in the tabernacle before the Lord, and having moreover repeated the oral law to Joshua his successor, he went on the seventh day into Mount Nebo, and there died; that after his death Joshua delivered the same oral law to the elders who after succeeded him, and they delivered it to the prophets, and the prophets transmitted it

down to each other till it came to Jeremiah, who delivered it to Baruch, and Baruch to Ezra, by whom it was delivered to the men of the great synagogue, the last of whom was Simon the Just; that by him it was delivered to Antigonus of Socho, and by him to Jose the son of Jochanan, and by him to Jose the son of Joeser, and by him to Nathan the Arbelite and Joshua the son of Berachiah, and by them to Judah the son of Jabhai, and, Simeon the son of Shatah, and by them to Shemaiah and Abitulion, and by them to Hillel and by Hillel to Simeon his son, who is supposed to have been the same who took our Savior into his arms when he was brought to the temple to be there presented to the Lord at the time of his mother's purification; and by Simeon it was delivered to Gamaliel his son, the same at whose feet Paul was brought up, and by him to Simeon his son, by him to Gamaliel his son, and by him to Simeon his son, and by him to Rabbah Judah Hakkadosh his son, who wrote it into the book called the Mishnah. But all this is mere fiction spun out of the fertile invention of the Talmudists, without the least foundation either in Scripture or in any authentic history for it. But since all this has made a part of the Jewish creed, they do as firmly believe their traditions thus to have come from God in the manner I have related, as they do the written word itself; and have now, as it were, wholly resolved their religion into these traditions. There is no understanding what their religion at present is without it, and it is for this reason I have here inserted it.

“But the truth is this: After the death of Simon the Just there arose a sort of men whom they call The Jarmain, or the Mishnical doctors, who made it their business to study and descant upon those traditions which had been received and allowed by Ezra and the men of the great synagogue, and to draw inferences and consequences from them, all of which they ingrafted into the body of these ancient traditions, as if they had been as authentic as the others; which example being followed by those who after succeeded them in this profession, they continually added their own imaginations to what they had received from those who went before them, whereby the traditions, becoming as a snow-ball, the farther they rolled down from one generation to another the more they gathered, and the greater the bulk of them grew. And thus it went on till the middle of the second century after Christ, then Antoninus Pius governed the Roman empire, by which time they found it necessary to put an these traditions

into writing; for they were then grown to so great a number, and enlarged to so huge a heap, as to exceed the possibility of being any longer preserved in the memory of men. And besides, in the second destruction which their country had undergone from the Romans a little before, in the reign of Adrian the preceding emperor, most of their learned men having been cut off, and the chiefest of their schools broken up and dissolved, and vast numbers of their people dissipated, and driven out of their land, the usual method of preserving their traditions had then in a great measure failed; and therefore, there being danger that under these disadvantages they might be all forgotten and lost, for the preservation of them it was resolved that they should be all collected together, and put into a book; and Rabbi Judah, the son of Simeon, who from the reputed sanctity of his life was called Hakkadosh, that is, The Holy, and was then rector of the school which they had at Tiberis in Galilee, and president of the Sanhedrin that there sat, undertook the work, and compiled it in six books, each consisting of several tracts, which altogether made up the number of sixty-three; in which, under their proper heads, he methodically digested all that had hitherto been delivered to them, of their law and their religion, by the tradition of their ancestors. And this is the book called The Mishnah, which book was forthwith received by the Jews with great veneration throughout all their dispersions, and has ever since been held in high estimation among them; for their opinion of it is, that all the particulars therein contained were dictated by God himself to Moses from Mount Sinai, as well as the written word itself, and consequently must be of the same Divine authority with it, and ought to be as sacredly observed. And therefore, as soon as it was published, it became the subject of the studies of all their learned men; and the chiefest of them, both in Judea and Babylonia, employed themselves to make comments on it; and these, with the Mishnah, make up both their Talmuds; that is, the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonish Talmud. These comments they call the Gemara, i.e., The Complement, because by them the Mishnah is fully explained, and the whole traditionary doctrines of their law and their religion completed. For the Mishnah is the text, and the Gemara the comment; and both together is what they call the Talmud. That made by the Jews of Judea is called the Jerusalem Talmud, that by the Jews of Babylonia is called the Babylonish Talmud. The former was completed about the year of our Lord 300, and is published in one large folio; the latter was published about two hundred



years after, in the beginning of the sixth century, and has had several editions since the invention of printing. The last, published at Amsterdam, is in twelve folios; and in these two Talmuds, the law and the prophets being in a manner quite justled out of them, is contained the whole of the Jewish religion that is now professed among them; but the Babylonish Talmud is that which they chiefly follow; for the other, that is, the Jerusalem Talmud, being obscure, and hard to be understood, is not now much regarded by them. But this and the Mishnah, being the most ancient books which they have, except the Chaldee Paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan, and both written in the language and style of the Jews of Judea; our countryman, Dr. Lightfoot, has made very good use of them in explaining several places of the New Testament by parallel phrases and sayings out of them. For the one being composed about the one hundred and fiftieth year of our Lord, and the other about the three hundredth, the idioms, proverbial sayings, and phraseologies, used in our Savior's time, might very well be preserved in them. But the other Talmud being written in the language and style of Babylonia, and not compiled till about the five hundredth year of our Lord, or, as some will have it, much later, this cannot so well serve for this purpose. However, it is now the Alcoran of the Jews, into which they have resolved all their faith, and all their religion, although framed almost with the same imposture as that of Mohammed, out of the doctrines falsely pretended to be brought from heaven. And in this book all that now pretend to any learning among them place their studies; and no one can be a master in their schools, or a teacher in their synagogues, who is not well instructed and versed herein; that is, not only in the text, which is the Mishnah, but also in the comment thereon, which is the Gemara; and this comment they so highly esteem beyond the other, that the name of Gemara is wholly engrossed by it; the Gemara of the Babylonish Talmud being that only which they now usually understand by that word; for this with the Mishnah, to which it is added, they think truly completes and makes up the whole of their religion, as fully and perfectly containing all the doctrines, rules, and rites thereof; and therefore it is, in their opinion, the most deserving of that name, which signifies what completes, fills up, or perfects; for this is the meaning of the word in the Hebrew language.

“They who professed this sort of learning, that is, taught and propagated this traditionary doctrine among them, have been distinguished by several different titles and appellations, according to the different ages in which they lived. From the time of the men of the great synagogue to the publishing of the Mishnah, they were called Jarmain; and they are the Mishnical doctors, out of whose doctrines and traditions the Mishnah was composed. And from the time of the publishing of the Mishnah to the publishing of the Babylonish Talmud, they were called Amoraim; and they are the Gemarical doctors, out of whose doctrines and traditions the Gemara was composed. And for about a hundred years after the publishing of the Talmud, they were called Seburaim, and after that Georim. And these were the several classes in which their learned men have been ranked, according to the several ages in which they lived. But for these later times, the general name of Rabbi is that only whereby their learned men are called, there being no other title whereby they have been distinguished for nearly seven hundred years past.

“For about the year 1040 all their schools in Mesopotamia, where only they enjoyed these high titles, being destroyed, and all their learned men thence expelled and driven out by the Mohammedan princes, who governed in those parts; they have since that, with the greatest number of their people, flocked into the western parts, especially into Spain, France, and England; and from that time all these pompous titles which they affected in the East being dropped, they have retained none other for their learned men from that time but that of Rabbi; excepting only that those of them who minister in their synagogues are called Chacams, i.e., wise men.

“But the great work of Ezra was, his collecting together and setting forth a correct edition of the Holy Scriptures, which he labored much in, and went a great way in the perfecting of it. Of this both Christians and Jews gave him the honor; and many of the ancient fathers attribute more to him in this particular than the Jews themselves; for they hold that all the Scriptures were lost and destroyed in the Babylonish captivity, and that Ezra restored them all again by Divine revelation. Thus says Irenaeus and thus say Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Basil, and others. But they had no other foundation for it than that fabulous relation which we have of it in the fourteenth chapter of the second Apocryphal book of Esdras, a book too absurd for the Romanists themselves to receive into their canon.

“Indeed, in the time of Josiah, through the impiety of the two preceding reigns of Manasseh and Amon, the book of the law was so destroyed and lost. The copy of it which Hilkiyah is said to have found, and the grief which Josiah expressed at the hearing of it read, do plainly show that neither of them had ever seen it before.

“And if the king and the high priest, who were both men of eminent piety, were without this part of the Holy Scripture, it can scarcely be thought that any one else then had it. But so religious a prince as King Josiah could not leave this long unremedied. By his orders copies were written out from this original; and search being made for all the other parts of Holy Scripture, both in the colleges of the sons of the prophets, and all other places where they could be found, care was taken for transcripts to be made out of these also; and thenceforth copies of the whole became multiplied among the people; all those who were desirous of knowing the laws of their God, either writing them out themselves, or procuring others to do it for them; so that within a few years after the holy city and temple were destroyed, and the authentic copy of the law, which was laid up before the Lord, was burnt and consumed with them, yet by this time many copies, both of the law and the prophets, and all the other sacred writings, were got into private hands, who carried them with them into captivity.

“That Daniel had a copy of the Holy Scriptures with him in Babylon is certain, for he quotes the law, and also makes mention of the prophecies of the prophet Jeremiah, which he could not do had he never seen them. And in the sixth chapter of Ezra it is said, that on the finishing of the temple, in the sixth year of Darius, the priests and the Levites were settled in their respective functions, according as it is written in the law of Moses. But how could they do this according to the written law, if they had not copies of the law then among them? And this was nearly sixty years before Ezra came to Jerusalem.

“And farther, in Nehemiah, Nehemiah 8:1, the people called for the law of Moses, to have it read to them, which the Lord had commanded Israel, which plainly shows that the book was then well known to have been extant, and not to need such a miraculous expedient as that of the Divine revelation for its restoration; all that Ezra did in this manner was to get

together as many copies of the sacred writings as he could, and out of them all to set forth a correct edition; in the performance of which he took care of the following particulars: First, He corrected all the errors that had crept into these copies, through the negligence or mistakes of transcribers; for, by comparing them one with the other, he found out the true reading, and set all at rights. Whether the *keri cethib*, or various readings, that are in our present Hebrew Bibles were of these corrections, I dare not say. The generality of the Jewish writers tell us that they were; and others among them hold them as much more ancient, referring them, with absurdity enough, as far back as the times of the first writers of the books in which they are found, as if they themselves had designedly made these various readings for the sake of some mysteries comprised under them. It is most probable that they had their original from the mistakes of the transcribers after the time of Ezra, and the observations and corrections of the Masorites made thereon. If any of them were of those ancient various readings which had been observed by Ezra himself in the comparing of those copies he collated on this occasion, and were by him annexed in the margin as corrections of those errors which he found in the text, it is certain those could not be of that number which are now in those sacred books that were written by himself, or taken into the canon after his time; for there are *keri cethib* in them as well as in the other books of the Hebrew Scriptures. Secondly, He collected together all the books of which the Holy Scriptures did then consist, and disposed them in their proper order; and settled the canon of Scripture for his time. These books he divided into three parts: 1. The Law. 2. The Prophets. 3. The *Cethubim*, or *Hagiographa*; i.e., the Holy Writings: which division our Savior himself takes notice of, Luke 24:44, where he says: ‘These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things might be fulfilled which are written in the law, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.’ For there, by the Psalms, he means the whole third part called the *Hagiographa*; for, that part beginning with the Psalms, the whole was for that reason then commonly called by that name; as usually with the Jews, the particular books are named from the words with which they begin. Thus with them Genesis is called *Bereshith*, Exodus *Shemoth*, Leviticus *Vaijakra*, etc., because they begin with these Hebrew words.

“And Josephus makes mention of this same division; for he says, in his first book against Apion, ‘We have only two and twenty books which are to be believed as of Divine authority, of which five are the books of Moses. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, king of Persia, the prophets, who were the successors of Moses, have written in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and documents of life for the use of men:’ in which division, according to him, the law contains Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The writings of the prophets, Joshua, Judges, with Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, with his Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the twelve minor prophets, Job, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther; and the Hagiographa, i.e., the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, which altogether make two and twenty books. This division was made for the sake of reducing the books to the number of their alphabet, in which were twenty-two letters. But at present they reckon these books to be twenty-four, and dispose of them in this order: First, the Law, which contains Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Secondly, the Writings of the Prophets, which they divide into the former prophets and the latter prophets: the books of the former prophets are, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; the books of the latter prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; the twelve minor prophets; the Hagiographa, which are the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, which they call the Song of Songs, Ruth, the Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and the Chronicles. Under the name of Ezra they comprehend the book of Nehemiah; for the Hebrews, and also the Greeks, anciently reckoned Ezra and Nehemiah but as one book. But this order has not been always observed among the Jews; neither is it so now in all places, for there has been great variety as to this, and that not only among the Jews, but also among the Christians, as well as the Greeks and Latins: but no variation herein is of any moment, for in what order soever the books are placed, they are still the word of God; and no change as to this can make any change as to that Divine authority which is stamped upon them. But all these books were not received into the canon in Ezra’s time, for Malachi it is supposed lived after him; and in Nehemiah mention is made of Jaddua as high priest, and of Darius Codomannus as king of Persia; who were at least a hundred years after his time. And in 1 Chronicles 3:1-24 of the first book of Chronicles the genealogy of the sons of Zerubbabel is

carried down for so many generations as must necessarily make it reach to the time of Alexander the Great; and therefore the book could not be put into the canon till after his time.

“It is most likely that the two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, as well as Malachi, were afterwards added in the time of Simon the Just, and that it was not till then that the Jewish canon of the Holy Scriptures was fully completed: and indeed these last books seem very much to want the exactness and skill of Ezra in their publication, they falling far sktil

Pisidia, it is said that ‘he stood up to preach after the reading of the law and the prophets;’ that is, after the reading of the first lesson out of the law, and the second lesson out of the prophets. And in that very sermon which he then preached, he tells them, ‘That the prophets were read at Jerusalem every Sabbath day,’ that is, in those lessons which were taken out of the prophets.

“These sections were divided into verses, which the Jews call *pesukim*; they were marked out in the Hebrew Bibles by two great points at the end of them, called from hence *soph-pasuk*, i.e., the end of the verse. If Ezra himself was not the author of this division, (as most say,) it was not long after him that it was introduced, for certainly it is very ancient. It is most likely that it was introduced for the sake of the Targumist or Chaldee interpreters; for after the Hebrew language had ceased to be the mother tongue of the Jews, and the Chaldee grew up into use among them instead of it, (as was the case after their return from the Babylonish captivity,) their usage was that, in the public reading of the law to the people, it was read to them, first in the original Hebrew, and after that rendered by an interpreter into the Chaldee language, that so all might fully understand the same; and this was done period by period; and therefore, that these periods might be the better distinguished, and the reader more certainly know how much to read at every interval, and the interpreter know how much to interpret at every interval, there was a necessity that some marks should be invented for their direction herein. The rule given in the ancient books is, that in the law the reader was to read one verse, and then the interpreter was to render the same into Chaldee; but that in the prophets the reader was to read three verses together, and then the interpreter was to render the same three verses into Chaldee, in the same manner; which manifestly proves that the division of the Scriptures into verses must be as ancient as the way of interpreting them into the Chaldee language in their synagogues, which was from the very time that the synagogues were erected, and the Scriptures publicly read in them, after the Babylonish captivity. This was at first done only in the law; for till the time of the Maccabees, the law only was read in their synagogues: but afterwards, in imitation of this, the same was also done in the prophets, and in the Hagiographa especially. After that the prophets also began to be publicly read among them, as well as the law; and from hence the division of the

Holy Scriptures into verses, it is most likely, was first made; but without any numerical figures annexed to them.

“The manner whereby they are now distinguished in their common Hebrew Bibles is by the two great points called *soph-pasuk* above mentioned; but whether this is the ancient way is by some made a question. The objection against it is this: If the distinction of verses was introduced for the sake of the Chaldee interpreters in their synagogues, and must therefore be held as ancient as that way of interpreting the Scriptures in them, it must then have place in their sacred synagogical books; for none others were used, either by their readers or their interpreters, in their public assemblies. But it has been anciently held as a rule among them, that any points or accents written into these sacred books pollute and profane them; and therefore, no copy of either the law or the prophets now used in their synagogues has any points or accents written in it. To this I answer, Whatever be the practice of the modern Jews, this is no rule to let us know what was the ancient practice among them, since in many particulars they have varied from the ancient usages, as they now do from each other, according to the different parts of the world in which they dwell. For mention is made of them in the *Mishnah*; and that the reason for this division was for the direction of the readers, and the Chaldee interpreters, is also there implied; and therefore, supposing a division for this use, it must necessarily follow, that there must have been some marks to set it out; otherwise it would not have answered the end intended.

“It is most likely that anciently the writing of those books was in long lines, from one side of the parchment to the other, and that the verses in them were distinguished in the same manner as the *stichi* afterwards were in the Greek Bibles; for the manner of their writing those *stichi* was, to allow a line to every *stichus*, and then to end the writing where they ended the *stichus*, leaving the rest of the line void, in the same manner as a line is left at a break: but this was losing too much of the parchment, and making the book too bulky; for the avoiding of both these inconveniences, the way afterwards was, to put a point at the end of every *stichus*, and so continue the writing without leaving any part of the line void as before. And in the same manner I conceive the *pesukim*, or verses of the Hebrew Bibles, were anciently written. At first they allowed a line to every verse, and a line drawn from one end of the parchment to the other, of the length as above



mentioned, was sufficient to contain any verse that is now in the Hebrew Bible; but many verses falling short of this length, they found the same inconveniences that the Greeks after did in the first way of writing their stichi; and therefore came to the same remedy, that is, they did put the two points above mentioned (which they call soph-pasuk) at the place where the former verse ended, and continued the writing of the next verse in the same line, without leaving any void space at all in the line. And so their manner has continued ever since, excepting only that between their sections, as well the smaller as the larger, there is some void space left, to make the distinction between them; and I am the more inclined to think this to be the truth of the matter; that is, that anciently the verses of the Hebrew Bible were so many lines, because among the ancients of other nations, about the same time, the lines in the writings of prose authors, as well as the poets, were termed verses; and hence it is that we are told that Zoroaster's works contain two millions of verses, and Aristotle's, four hundred and forty-five thousand two hundred and seventy; though neither of them wrote any thing but in prose; and so also we find the writings of Tully, of Origen, of Lactantius, and others, who were all prose writers, reckoned by the number of verses, which could be no other than so many lines. And why then might not the Bible verses anciently have been of the same nature also? I mean when written in long lines as aforesaid. But the long lines often occasioning, that in reading to the end of one verse, they lost the beginning of the next, and so often did read wrong, either by skipping a line, or beginning the same again; for the avoiding of this they came to the way of writing in columns and in short lines, as above mentioned. But all this I mean of their sacred synagogical books. In their common Bibles they are not tied up to such rules, but write and print them so as they may serve for their instruction and convenience in common use.

“But the division of the Holy Scriptures into chapters, as we now have them, is of a much later date. The Psalms, indeed, were always divided as at present; for St. Paul, in his sermon at Antioch, in Pisidia, quotes the second Psalm: but as to the rest of the Holy Scriptures, the division of them into such chapters as we find at present is a matter of which the ancients knew nothing. Some attribute it to Stephen Langton, who was archbishop of Canterbury in the reigns of King John and King Henry III. his son. But the true author of this invention was Hugo de Sancto Claro,

who being from a Dominican monk advanced to the dignity of a cardinal, and the first of that order that was so, is commonly called Hugo Cardinalis.

“The third thing that Ezra did about the Holy Scriptures in his edition of them was:-he added in several places, throughout the books of this edition, what appeared necessary for the illustrating, correcting, or completing of them, wherein he was assisted by the same Spirit by which they were at first written. Of this sort we may reckon the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which, giving an account of the death and burial of Moses, and of the succession of Joshua after him, could not be written by Moses himself, who undoubtedly was the penman of all the rest of that book. It seems most probable that it was added by Ezra at this time: and such also we may reckon the several interpolations which occur in many places of the Holy Scriptures. For that there are such interpolations is undeniable, there being many passages through the whole sacred writers which create difficulties which can never be solved without the allowing of them: as for instance, Genesis 12:6, it is remarked on Abraham’s coming into the land of Canaan, that the ‘Canaanites were then in the land;’ which is not likely to have been said till after the time of Moses, when the Canaanites, being extirpated by Joshua, were then no longer in the land: and Genesis 22:14, we read, ‘As it is said to this day, In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.’ But Mount Moriah, which is the mount there spoken of, was not called the Mount of the Lord till the temple was built on it many hundred years after; and this being here spoken of as a proverbial saying that obtained among the Israelites in after ages, the whole style of the text manifestly points at a time after Moses, when they were in the possession of the land in which this mountain stood; and, therefore, both these particulars prove the words cited to have been an interpolation. Genesis 36:3, it is written, ‘And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the land of Israel,’ which could not have been said till after there had been a king in Israel; and therefore they cannot be Moses’s words, but must have been interpolated afterwards. Exodus 16:35, the words of the text are, ‘And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, till they came to a land inhabited. They did eat manna till they came into the borders of the land of Canaan.’ But Moses was dead before the manna ceased; and, therefore, these cannot be his words, but must have been inserted afterwards. Deuteronomy 2:12, it

is said, 'The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime, but the children of Esau succeeded them when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead, as Israel did unto the land of his possession which the Lord gave unto them.' Which could not have been written by Moses, Israel having not till after his death entered into the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them. Deuteronomy 3:11, it is said, 'Only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron. Is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon?' The whole style and strain of which text, especially that of the last clause of it, plainly speaks it to have been written a long while after that king was slain; and therefore it could not have been written by Moses, who died within five months after. In the same chapter, Deuteronomy 3:14, it is said, 'Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day.' Where the phrase unto this day speaks a much greater distance of time after the fact related than those few months in which Moses survived after the conquest; and therefore what is there written must have been inserted by some other hand than that of Moses, and long after his death. And in the book of Proverbs, which was certainly King Solomon's, in the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter, it is written, 'These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.' Which must certainly have been added many ages after Solomon; for Hezekiah was the twelfth generation in descent from him. "Many more instances of such interpolated passages might be given; for throughout the whole Scriptures they have been frequently cast in by way of parentheses; where they have appeared necessary for the explaining, connecting, or illustrating the text, or supplying what was wanting in it: but those already mentioned are sufficient to prove the thing. Of which interpolations undoubtedly Ezra was the author, in all the books which passed his examination; and Simon the Just in all the rest which were added afterwards; for they all seem to refer to those latter times.

"But these additions do not at all detract from the Divine authority of the whole, because they were all inserted by the direction of the same Holy Spirit which dictated all the rest. This, as to Ezra, is without dispute, he being himself one of the Divine persons of the Holy Scriptures: for he was most certainly the writer of that book in the Old Testament which bears

his name; and he is, upon good grounds, supposed to be the author of two more, that is, of the two books of Chronicles, as perchance he was also of the book of Esther. And if the books written by him be of Divine authority, why may not every thing else be so which he has added to any of the rest, since there is reason for us to suppose that he was as much directed by the Holy Spirit of God in the one as in the other? The great importance of the work proves the thing, for as it was necessary for the Church of God that this work should be done; so also it was necessary for the work that the person called thereto should be thus assisted in the completing of it.

“Fourthly, He changed the names of several places that were grown obsolete, putting instead of them the new names by which they were at that time called, that the people might the better understand what was written. Thus, Genesis 14:14, Abraham is said to have pursued the kings who carried Lot away captive as far as Dan, whereas the name of that place was Laish till the Danites, long after the death of Moses, possessed themselves of it, and called it, Dan after the name of their father; and, therefore, it could not be called Dan in the original copy of Moses, but that name must have been put in afterwards instead of that of Laish on this review. And so in several places in Genesis, and also in Numbers, we find mention made of Hebron, whereas the name of that city was Kiriath-arba, till Caleb, having the possession of it after the division of the land, called it Hebron after the name of Hebron, one of his sons: and, therefore, that name could not be had in the text, till placed there long after the time of Moses by way of exchange for that of Kiriath-arba, which it is not to be doubted was done at the time of this review.

“And many other like examples of this may be given; whereby it appears that the study of those who governed the Church of God at those times was to render the Scriptures as plain and intelligible to the people as they could; and not to hide and conceal any of it from them.

“Fifthly, He wrote out the whole in the Chaldee character: for that having now grown wholly into use among the people after the Babylonish captivity, he changed the old Hebrew character for it, which hath since that time been retained only by the Samaritans, among whom it is preserved even to this day. This was the old Phoenician character, from which the

Greeks borrowed theirs; and the old Ionian alphabet bears some resemblance to it, as Scaliger shows in his notes upon Eusebius's Chronicon. In this Moses and the other prophets recorded the sacred oracles of God; and in this the finger of God himself wrote the ten commandments in the two tables of stone. Eusebius, in his Chronicon, tells us so, and St. Jerome doth the same; and so do also both the Talmuds; and the generality of learned men, as well among the Jews as Christians, hold this opinion.

“Whether Ezra on this review did add the vowel points which are now in the Hebrew Bibles, is a hard question to be decided: it went without contradiction in the affirmative till Elias Levita, a German Jew, wrote against it about the beginning of the Reformation, Buxtorf, the father, endeavored to refute his argument; but Capellus, a Protestant divine of the French Church, and professor of Hebrew in their university at Saumur, hath, in a very elaborate discourse, made a thorough reply to all that can be said on this head, and very strenuously asserted the contrary. Buxtorf, the son, in vindication of his father's opinion, has written an answer to it, but not with that satisfaction to the learned world as to hinder the generality of them from going into the other opinion.

“There is in the church of St. Dominic, in Bononia, a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, kept with a great deal of care, which they pretend to be the original copy written by Ezra himself, and therefore it is there valued at so high a rate that great sums of money have been borrowed by the Bononians upon the pawn of it, and again repaid for its redemption. It is written in a very fair character upon a sort of leather, and made up in a roll, according to the ancient manner; but it having the vowel points annexed, and the writing being fresh and fair, without any decay, both these particulars prove the novelty of that copy.

“But though Ezra's government over all Judah and Jerusalem expired in this year, 446; yet his labor to serve the Church of God did not end here; for he still went on as a preacher of righteousness, and a skillful scribe in the law of God, to perfect the reformation which he had begun, both in preparing for the people correct editions of the Scriptures, and also in bringing all things in Church and state to be conformed to Scripture rules. And this he continued to do so long as he lived, and in this he was

thoroughly assisted and supported by the next governor, who, coming to Jerusalem with the sane intention, and the same zeal for promoting the honor of God, and the welfare of his people in Judah and Jerusalem, as Ezra did, struck in heartily with Ezra in the work, so that Ezra went on still to do the same things by the authority of the new governor, which he before did by his own; and, by their thus joining together in the same holy undertaking, and their mutually assisting each other, it exceedingly prospered in their hands, till at length, notwithstanding all opposition, both from within and without, it was brought to full perfection forty-nine years after it had been begun by Ezra. Whether Ezra lived so long is uncertain; but what he had not time to do was completed by the piety and zeal of his successor.”

See the Introduction to the book of Nehemiah; and see Prideaux’s Connection, vol. i., edit. 1725.

For all other matters relative to the text, see the notes as they occur.

# THE BOOK

OF

# EZRA

## Chronological Notes relative to this Book

- Year from the Creation, according to Archbishop Usher, whose system of chronology is most generally received, 3468.
- Year before the birth of Christ, 532.
- Year before the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 536.
- Year of the Julian Period, 4178.
- Year since the flood of Noah, according to the English Bible, 1812.
- Year of the Cali Yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 2566.
- Year from the vocation of Abram, 1386.
- Year from the destruction of Troy, 649. This we collect from three passages in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, (who flourished in the Augustan ages) which state that an interval of four hundred and thirty-two years elapsed from the destruction of Troy to the building of Rome.
- Year from the foundation of Solomon's temple, 475.
- Year since the division of Solomon's monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 439.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, who re-established the Olympic games, three hundred and thirty-eight years after their institution by Hercules, or about eight hundred and eighty-four years before the commencement of the Christian era, 349.
- Year since the conquest of Coroebus at Elis, usually styled the first Olympiad, (being the twenty-eighth Olympiad after their re-establishment by Iphitus,) 241.
- First year of the sixty-first Olympiad.

- Year of the Varronian or generally received era of the building of Rome, 218. This is upon the supposition that Rome was built in the last year of the sixth Olympiad.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Cato and the *Fasti Consulares*, 217. Dionysius of Halicarnassus follows this account; for he says that the metropolis of the Roman work was built in the first year of the sixth Olympiad, which was the first year of Charops, the first decennial archon of the Athenians.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Polybius, 216.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, who lived about two hundred and twenty-five years before the Christian era, 212.
- Year of the Nabonassarean era, 212.
- Year since the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, 186.
- Year from the destruction of Solomon's temple by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, 53.
- Year of Servius Tullius, the sixth king of the Romans, and father-in-law of Tarquin the Proud, 43.
- Year of Ariston, king of Lacedaemon, and of the family of the Proclidae, or Eurypontidae, 29.
- Year of Anaxandrides, king of Lacedaemon, and of the family of the Eurysthenidae, or Agidae, 28. N. B. The kings of the Lacedaemonians of the families of the Proclidae and the Eurysthenidae sat on the throne together for several hundred years.
- Year of Amyntas, the ninth king of the Macedonians, 12.
- Year of the reign of Cyrus, computing from the year in which he dethroned his grandfather Astyages, the last king of Media, 24. But this was only his first year, if with the Holy Scriptures, as well as Xenophon in the eighth book of his *Institutes*, we compute the years of his reign from the time in which he was put in possession of the whole Eastern empire. See Ezra 1:1.
- Year of the Babylonish captivity, 70. The years of this captivity are generally reckoned from 606 B.C., when Jehoiakim king of Judah was put in chains to be carried to Babylon; and are supposed to be terminated by the edict of Cyrus to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. But others are of opinion that the seventy years' captivity are to be computed from the total destruction of the Jewish monarchy; and that



they reach down to the second year of Darius king of Persia, at which time Zerubbabel and Joshua were encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to proceed with the rebuilding of the temple.

## CHAPTER 1

*The proclamation of Cyrus for the rebuilding of the temple, 1-4. The people provide for their return, 5, 6. Cyrus restores to Sheshbazzar the vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar out of the temple of Solomon, 7-11.*

In the introduction to this book the reader will find the history of Ezra detailed at considerable length. It is only necessary to say here that he is generally allowed among the Jews to have been of the sacerdotal family, and therefore he is called ο ἱερεὺς, the priest by the Septuagint. Among the rabbins he passes for a most extraordinary critic, Divinely authorized to collect and arrange the different portions of the sacred writings, and digest them into a system. How far all they say on this subject is true, we cannot tell; he was, beyond all controversy, a very eminent man; and in all that he did, acted under the immediate direction and inspiration of the Almighty.

This history contains the transactions of about eighty-two years; from the first year of Cyrus in Babylon, according to Archbishop Usher, A.M. 3468, to the nineteenth year of Ardsheer Diraz Dest, or Artaxerxes Longimanus, who sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem, about A.M. 3550. For all other particulars, see the introduction.

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. *Now in the first year*** This is word for word with the two last verses of the preceding book; which stand here in their proper place and connection, but there are entirely destitute of chronological connection and reference.

**Cyrus** This prince, so eminent in antiquity, is said to have been the son of Cambyses king of Persia, and Mandane, daughter of Astyages king of the Medes; and was born about six hundred years before Christ. Josephus accounts for his partiality to the Jews from this circumstance; that he was

shown the places in Isaiah the prophet where he is mentioned by name, and his exploits and conquests foretold: see Isaiah 44:28; 45:1, etc. Finding himself thus distinguished by the God of the Jews, he was anxious to give him proofs of his gratitude in return; and so made the decree in favor of the Jews, restored their sacred vessels, gave them liberty to return to their own land, and encouraged them to rebuild the temple of Jehovah, etc.

It is very probable that when Cyrus took Babylon he found Daniel there, who had been long famed as one of the wisest ministers of state in all the East; and it is most likely that it was this person who pointed out to him the prophecy of Isaiah, and gave him those farther intimations relative to the Divine will which were revealed to himself. Of his death there are contradictory accounts. Herodotus says, that having turned his arms against the Massagetes, and killed the son of Tomyris their queen, the mother, impatient to avenge the death of her son, sent him a defiance; promised to glut him with blood; and, having attacked him, pretended to be worsted and to fly; and thus she drew him and his army into an ambuscade, where he was routed and slain, and a considerable part of his army destroyed. The enraged queen having found his body, cut off his head, and threw it into a vessel full of human blood, with this most bitter sarcasm:—

εὐ μὲν, ἐμεῦ ζώσης τε καὶ νικῶσης ἐς μάχην,  
 ἀπώλεσας παῖδα τὸν ἐμὸν, ἐλὼν δολῶ· σὲ δ' ἐγὼ,  
 καταπερ ἠπειλήσα, αἱματος κορεσῶ.

— HEROD. Clio, c. 214.

“Although living and victorious, thou hast destroyed me in slaying my son, whom thou hast overcome by deceit; but, as I have threatened, I will now slake thy thirst with blood.”

Cyrus, thy thirst was blood, now drink thy fill.

**By-Jeremiah** This prophet, Jeremiah 25:12; 29:11, had foretold that the Babylonish captivity should last only seventy years: these were now ended; Cyrus had given the Jews permission and encouragement to return to Judea, and rebuild the temple of the Lord; and thus the prediction of Jeremiah was fulfilled.

**Verse 2. *The Lord God of heaven*** It is not unworthy of remark, that in all the books written prior to the captivity, Jehovah is called The Lord of Hosts; but in all the books written after the captivity, as 2 Chronicles, Ezra Nehemiah, and Daniel, he is styled The God of Heaven. The words however have the same meaning.

All the kingdoms of the earth. At this time the empire of the Medo-Persians was very extensive: according to ancient writers, Cyrus, at this time, reigned over the Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Armenians, Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Bactrians, Indians, Saci, Cilicians, Paphlagonians, Moriandrians, and many others. His empire extended on the EAST, to the Red Sea; on the NORTH, to the Euxine Sea; on the WEST, to the island of Cyprus and Egypt; and on the SOUTH, to Ethiopia.

**Verse 4. *Whosoever remaineth in any place*** Every one was at liberty to go, but none was obliged to go. Thus their attachment to God was tried; he whose heart was right with God went; he who was comfortably settled in Babylon, might go if he chose. Those who did not go, were commanded to assist their brethren who went.

**Verse 6. *Vessels of silver*** Articles of silver, gold, etc.

**Verse 7. *The king brought forth the vessels*** See on Ezra 1:9-11.

**Verse 8. *Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.*** This was probably the Chaldean name of him who was originally called Zerubbabel: the former signifies joy in affliction; the latter, a stranger in Babylon. The latter may be designed to refer to his captive state; the former, to the prospect of release. Some think this was quite a different person, a Persian or Chaldean, sent by Cyrus to superintend whatever officers or men Cyrus might have sent to assist the Jews on their return; and to procure them help in the Chaldean provinces, through which they might be obliged to travel.

**Verse 11. *All the vessels-were five thousand and four hundred.*** This place is without doubt corrupted; here it is said the sum of all the vessels, of every quality and kind, was five thousand four hundred; but the enumeration of the articles, as given in Ezra 1:9, 10, gives the sum of two

thousand four hundred and ninety-nine only. But we can correct this account from 1Esdras 2:13, 14.

I shall set both accounts down, that they may be compared together.

EZRA, Ezra 1:9-11.

Golden chargers	30
Silver chargers	1000
Knives	29
Golden basons	30
Silver ditto, second sort	410
Other vessels	1000

Said to be 5400                      only 2499

Difference of the first account from itself.. 2901

1 ESDRAS, 1Esdras 2:13, 14.

Golden cups	1000
Silver cups.	1000
Silver censers	29
Golden vials	30
Silver vials	2410
Other vessels	1000
Total	5469

Difference of the second account from the first

69

According, therefore, to the sum total in Ezra, the sum total in Esdras is only 69 different. See the next chapter.

It may be said that the vessels did actually amount to 5400, and that the chief of them only were intended to be specified; and these happen to amount to 2499; but that it was not the design of Ezra to insert the whole; and that the ninth verse should be considered as stating, And of the chief of them, that is, the gold and silver articles, this is the number. But the expression in Ezra 1:10, other vessels, sets this conjecture aside: the place is most manifestly corrupted.



## CHAPTER 2

*An account of those who returned from Babylon, 1-35. The children of the priests who returned, 36-39. Of the Levites, 40. Of the singers, 41. Of the porters, 42. Of the Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's servants, 43-58. Others who could not find out their registers, 59-62. The number of the whole congregation, 63, 64. Of their servants, maids, and singers, 65. Their horses and mules, 66. Their camels and asses, 67. The offerings of the chief men when they came to Jerusalem, 68, 69. The priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Nethinim, betake themselves to their respective cities, 70.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. *These are the children of the province*** That is, of Judea; once a kingdom, and a flourishing nation; now a province, subdued, tributary, and ruined! Behold the goodness and severity of God! Some think Babylon is meant by the province; and that the children of the province means those Jews who were born in Babylon. But the first is most likely to be the meaning, for thus we find Judea styled, Ezra 5:8. Besides, the province is contradistinguished from Babylon even in this first verse, The children of the province-that had been carried away unto Babylon.

**Verse 2. *Which came with Zerubbabel*** There are many difficulties in this table of names; but as we have no less than three copies of it, that contained here from Ezra 2:1-67, a second in Nehemiah 7:6-69, and a third in 1Esdras 5:7-43, on a careful examination they will be found to correct each other. The versions also, and the *Variae Lectiones* of Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi, do much toward harmonizing the names.

Though the sum total at the end of each of these enumerations is equal, namely 42, 360, yet the particulars reckoned up make in Ezra only 29, 818, and in Nehemiah 31, 089. We find that Nehemiah mentions 1765 persons which are not in Ezra, and Ezra has 494 not mentioned by Nehemiah. Mr. Altung thinks that this circumstance, which appears to

render all hope of reconciling them impossible, is precisely the very point by which they can be reconciled; for if we add Ezra's surplus to the sum in Nehemiah, and the surplus of Nehemiah to the number in Ezra, the numbers will be equal.

Thus:-The number in Ezra	29, 818
Surplus in Nehemiah.	1, 765
Sum total	31, 583

The number in Nehemiah	31, 089
The surplus in Ezra	494
Sum total	31, 583

If we subtract this sum 31, 583 from 42, 360, we shall have a deficiency of 10, 777 from the numbers as summed up in the text; and these are not named here, either because their registers were not found, or they were not of Judah and Benjamin, the tribes particularly concerned, but of the other Israelitish tribes; see Ezra 2:36.

**Verse 3. *The children of Parosh*** Where the word children is found in this table, prefixed to the name of a man, it signifies the descendants of that person, as from Ezekiel 2:3-21. Where it is found prefixed to a place, town, etc., it signifies the inhabitants of that place, as from Ezra 2:21-35.

**Verse 21. *The children of Beth-lehem*** The inhabitants: see before.

**Verse 33. *The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono*** These were cities in the tribe of Benjamin; see on 1 Chronicles 8:12.

**Verse 36. *The priests*** The preceding list takes in the census of Judah and Benjamin.

**Verse 55. *The children of Solomon's servants*** The Nethinim, and others appointed to do the meaner services of the holy house.

**Verse 63. *The Tirshatha*** This is generally supposed to be Nehemiah, or the person who was the commandant; see Nehemiah 8:9; 10:1, for the word appears to be the name of an office. The Vulgate and Septuagint write it Atershatha, the Syriac and Arabic render it the princes of Judah. Some suppose the word to be Persian, but nothing like it of the same import occurs in that language at present. If, as Castel supposed, it

signifies austerity, or that fear which is unpressed by the authority of a governor, it may come from [P] ters, FEAR, or [P] tersh, ACID, the former from [P] tarsidan, to FEAR or DREAD.

***Should not eat of the most holy things*** There was a high priest then, but no Urim and Thummim, these having been lost in the captivity.

**Verse 66. *Their horses-seven hundred, etc.*** They went into captivity, stripped of every thing; they now return from it, abounding in the most substantial riches, viz., horses 736, or, according to Esdras, 7036; mules, 245; camels, 435; asses, 6720; besides gold, and silver, and rich stuffs. See below.

**Verse 69. *Threescore and one thousand drams of gold*** דרַכְמוֹנִים darkemonim, drakmons or darics; a Persian coin, always of gold, and worth about 1ú. 5s., not less than ú76, 250 sterling in gold.

***Five thousand pounds of silver*** מַנִּים manim, manehs or minas. As a weight, the maneh was 100 shekels; as a coin, 60 shekels in value, or about 9ú.; 5000 of these manehs therefore will amount to ú45, 000, making in the whole a sum of about ú120, 000; and in this are not included the 100 garments for priests.

Thus we find that God, in the midst of judgment, remembered mercy, and gave them favor in the land of their captivity.

**Verse 70. *Dwelt in their cities*** They all went to those cities which belonged originally to their respective families.



## CHAPTER 3

*The altar of burnt-offerings is set up, 1-3. They keep the feast of tabernacles, 4-6. They make provision for rebuilding the temple; and lay its foundation in the second month of the second year, 7, 8. Ceremonies observed in laying the foundation, 9-11. Some weep aloud, and others shout for joy, 12-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *When the seventh month was come*** The month Tisri, which answers to the latter part of our September, and beginning of October. It seems that the Israelites had left Babylon about the spring of the year; that on their arrival at Jerusalem they constructed themselves huts and sheds to lodge in among the ruins, in which they must have spent some months. After this they rebuilt the altar of burnt-offerings, and kept the feast of tabernacles, which happened about this time, and continued to offer sacrifices regularly, as if the temple were standing.

**Verse 2. *Jeshua the son of Jozadak*** He was grandson of Seraiah the high priest, who was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings 25:18, 21. This Jeshua or Joshua was the first high priest after the captivity.

**Verse 3. *They set the altar upon his bases*** Rebuilt it on the same spot on which it had formerly stood. As it was necessary to keep up the Divine worship during the time they should be employed in re-edifying the temple, they first reared this altar of burnt-offerings; and all this they did, “though fear was upon them,” because of the unfriendly disposition of their surrounding neighbors.

**Verse 4. *They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written*** This began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month; but they had begun the regular offerings from the first day of this month, Ezra 3:6. And these were religiously continued all the time they were building the temple.

**Verse 7. *They gave money also*** They copied the conduct of Solomon while he was building his temple; see 1 Kings 5:11. He employed the Tyrians, gave them meat and drink, etc.; and this permission they now had from Cyrus.

**Verse 8. *In the second year*** The previous time had been employed in clearing the ground, felling timber, hewing stones, and transporting them to the place, and making other necessary preparations for the commencement of the building.

**Verse 10. *After the ordinance of David*** With psalms which he composed, acting in the manner which he directed.

**Verse 12. *Wept with a loud voice*** They saw that the glory had departed from Israel; in their circumstances it was impossible to build such a house as the first temple was; and had this been even possible, still it would have been greatly inferior, because it wanted the ark of the covenant, the heavenly fire, the mercy-seat, the heavenly manna, Aaron's rod that budded, the Divine shechinah, the spirit of prophecy, and most probably the Urim and Thummim.

***Many shouted for joy*** Finding they were now restored to their own land, and to the worship of their God in his own peculiar city: these, in general, had not seen the original temple; and therefore could not feel affected in that way which the elderly people did.

The sight must have been very affecting: a whole people, one part crying aloud with sorrow; the other shouting aloud for joy; and on the same occasion too, in which both sides felt an equal interest! The prophet Haggai comforted them on this occasion by assuring them that the glory of this latter house should exceed that of the former, because the Lord (Jesus Christ) was to come to this temple, and fill it with his glory. See Haggai, Haggai 2:1-9.

## CHAPTER 4

*The Samaritans endeavor to prevent the rebuilding of the temple, 1-5. They send letters to Artaxerxes, against the Jews, 6-9. A copy of the letter, 10-16. He commands the Jews to cease from building the temple, which they do; nor was any thing farther done in the work till the second year of Darius, 17-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1. *Now when the adversaries*** These were the Samaritans, and the different nations with which the kings of Assyria had peopled Israel, when they had carried the original inhabitants away into captivity, see Ezra 4:9, 10.

**Verse 2. *Let us build with you*** We acknowledge the same God, are solicitous for his glory, and will gladly assist you in this work. But that they came with no friendly intention, the context proves.

**Verse 3. *Ye have nothing to do with us*** We cannot acknowledge you as worshippers of the true God, and cannot participate with you in anything that relates to his worship.

**Verse 4. *Weakened the hands*** Discouraged and opposed them by every possible means.

**Verse 5. *Hired counsellors*** They found means to corrupt some of the principal officers of the Persian court, so that the orders of Cyrus were not executed; or at least so slowly as to make them nearly ineffectual.

***Until the reign of Darius*** This was probably Darius the son of Hystaspes.

**Verse 6. *In the reign of Ahasuerus*** This is the person who is called Cambyses by the Greeks. He reigned seven years and five months; and during the whole of that time the building of the temple was interrupted.

**Verse 7. *In the days of Artaxerxes*** After the death of Cambyses, one of the Magi named Oropaestus by Trogus Pompeius, Smerdis by Herodotus, Mardus by AEschylus, and Sphendatates by Ctesias, usurped the empire, feigning himself to be Smerdis, the brother of Cambyses, who had been put to death. This is the person named Artaxerxes in the text: or, following the Hebrew, Artachshasta. It is generally believed, that from the time of Cyrus the great, Xerxes and Artaxerxes were names assumed by the Persian sovereigns, whatever their names had been before.

***Written in the Syrian tongue*** That is, the Syrian or Chaldean character was used; not the Hebrew.

***Interpreted, in the Syrian tongue.*** That is, the language, as well as the character, was the Syriac or Chaldaic.

**Verse 8. *Rehum the chancellor*** With this verse the Chaldee part of the chapter begins; and the same language continues to the end of Ezra 6:18. These men wrote to Darius in their own language; and the king in the same dialect returns an answer, chap. v. This circumstance adds authenticity to what is written: so scrupulous was the inspired penman, that he not only gave the words which each spoke and wrote, but he gave them also in the very language in which they were conceived and in the character peculiar to that language.

**Verse 10. *The great and noble Asnapper*** Whether this was Shalmaneser, or Esar-haddon, or some other person, learned men and chronologists are not agreed. The Syriac terms him Asphid; but of this person we know no more than we do of Asnapper. He might have been the military officer who was appointed to escort this people to Judea.

**Verse 11. *And at such a time.*** The word **וכענת** ucheeneth has greatly perplexed all commentators and critics. The versions give us no light; and the Vulgate translates it et dicunt salutem, “and they wish prosperity.” Some translate it and so forth; and our translators supposed that it referred to the date, which however is not specified, and might have been as easily entered as the words and at such a time.

In our first translation of the Bible, that by Coverdale, in 1535, the passage stands thus: “And other on this syde the water, and in Canaan.”

In that by Becke, 1549, it is thus: “And other on this syde the water, and in Ceneeth:” and in the margin he enters “or peace,” “or health.”

In Cardmarden’s Bible, printed at Rouen, 1566, it stands thus: “And other that are nowe on thys syde the water.”

In that printed by Barker, 1615, we find the text thus: “AND OTHER that are beyond the river, and Cheeneth;” on which is the following marginal note: “To wit, Euphrates: and he meaneth in respect of Babel, that they dwelt beyond it.” And the note on Cheeneth is, “Which were a certain people that envied the Jews.” All this is merely guessing, in the midst of obscurity; most of these having considered the original word כענת **Keeneth** as the name of a people; and in this they follow the Syriac, which uses the word Acaneth.

Calmet thinks we should read ובעת **Ubaeth**, “and at this time;” “as if they had said, “We wish thee to enjoy the same health and prosperity at all future times, which thou dost at present.” This is not remote from the meaning of the Chaldee original.

**Verse 13. Toll, tribute, and custom** The first term is supposed to imply the capitation tax; the second, an excise on commodities and merchandise; the third, a sort of land tax. Others suppose the first means a property tax; the second, a poll tax; and the third, what was paid on imports and exports. In a word, if you permit these people to rebuild and fortify their city, they will soon set you at naught, and pay you no kind of tribute.

**Verse 14. Now because we have maintenance from the king’s palace** More literally: Now because at all times we are salted with the salt of the palace; i.e., We live on the king’s bounty, and must be faithful to our benefactor. Salt was used as the emblem of an incorruptible covenant; and those who ate bread and salt together were considered as having entered into a very solemn covenant. These hypocrites intimated that they felt their conscience bound by the league between them and the king; and therefore could not conscientiously see any thing going on that was likely to turn to the king’s damage. They were probably also persons in the pay of the Persian king.

**Verse 15. *The book of the records of thy fathers*** That is, the records of the Chaldeans, to whom the Persians succeeded.

**Verse 17. *Peace, and at such a time*** The word **וכעת** ucheeth is like that which we have already considered on Ezra 4:10, and probably has the same meaning.

**Verse 19. *Hath made insurrection against kings*** Mow true is the proverb, "It is an easy thing to find a staff to beat a dog!" The struggles of the Israelites to preserve or regain their independency, which they had from God, are termed insurrection, rebellion, and sedition: because at last they fell under the power of their oppressors. Had they been successful in these struggles, such offensive words had never been used. In 1688 the people of England struggled to throw off an oppressive government, that was changing the times and the seasons, and overthrowing the religion of the country, and setting up in its place the spurious off-spring of popery and arbitrary government. They were successful; and it is called the Revolution: had they failed it would have been called rebellion; and the parties principally concerned would have been put to death.

**Verse 20. *Beyond the river*** That is, the Euphrates. Both David and Solomon carried their conquests beyond this river. See 2 Samuel 8:3, etc., and 1 Kings 4:21, where it is said, Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river (Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines; and unto the borders of Egypt.

**Verse 21. *Until another commandment shall be given from me.*** The rebuilding was only provisionally suspended. The decree was, Let it cease for the present; nor let it proceed at any time without an order express from me.

**Verse 23. *Made them to cease by force and power.*** Commanded them on pain of the king's displeasure not to proceed, obliging all to remit their labors, and probably bringing an armed force to prevent them from going forward.

**Verse 24. *So it ceased unto the second year of-Darius*** They had begun in the first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536, to go up to Jerusalem, and they were obliged to desist from the building B.C. 522; and thus they continued till

the second year of Darius, B.C. 519. See the chronology in the margin and the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

*Haggai and Zechariah the prophets encourage Zerubbabel and Jeshua to proceed with the building of the temple, 1, 2. Tatnai, the governor of the provinces on this side the Euphrates, and his companions, inquire by what authority they do this, 3-5. They write to Darius; a copy of the letter, 6-16. They request to know how they are to proceed, 17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *Haggai-and Zechariah*** These are the same whose writings we have among the twelve minor prophets.

***The son of Iddo*** That is, the grandson of Iddo; for Zechariah was the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo. See his prophecy, Zechariah 1:1.

**Verse 2. *Then rose up Zerubbabel*** Here we find three classes of men joining in the sacred work: Zerubbabel the civil governor; Jeshua the high priest or ecclesiastical governor; and Haggai and Zechariah the prophets. How glorious it is when we see the civil government joining with the sacerdotal and prophetic for the establishment and extension of true religion!

**Verse 3. *Tatnai, governor*** He was governor of the provinces which belonged to the Persian empire on their side of the Euphrates, comprehending Syria, Arabia Deserta, Phoenicia, and Samaria. He seems to have been a mild and judicious man; and to have acted with great prudence and caution, and without any kind of prejudice. The manner in which he represented this to the king is a full proof of this disposition.

**Verse 4. *What are the names*** It is most evident that this is the answer of the Jews to the inquiry of Tatnai, Ezra 5:3, and the verse should be read thus: Then said we unto them after this manner: THESE are the names of the men who make this building.



**Verse 5. *The eye of their God was upon the elders*** The watchful care of God was upon the elders. They were assured of his favor; and they found his especial providence working in their behalf.

**Verse 8. *With great stones*** They are making a very strong and a very costly building.

**Verse 11. *We are the servants of the God of heaven*** How simple, plain, and ingenuous is this confession! They were the servants of the God of heaven. How came they then into bondage! Why, they provoked the God of heaven-repeatedly sinned against him, and then he gave them into the hands of their enemies.

**Verse 16. *Sheshbazzar*** Probably the military officer that conducted the people from Babylon, and had the oversight of the work; but some think that Ezra is meant.

**Verse 17. *The-treasure house*** גִּנְזָיָא *ginzaiya*. This is a Persian word, [P] *gunji*, a treasury.

There is a great deal of good sense and candour in this letter. Nothing of passion or prejudice appears in it. They laid before the king a fair statement without any attempt to prejudice his mind, and gave him those directions which were most likely to lead him to the truth, and to form a correct judgment on a business which, however it issued, must be of considerable importance to the state. God was in all this business; he was now giving an additional proof of his continued regard for a disobedient people, whom, though he had punished in his justice, he had spared in his mercy.

## CHAPTER 6

*Darius orders search to be made for the edict of Cyrus, 1. It is found at Achmetha, 2. A transcript of this edict, 3-5. Darius confirms it, 6-12. Tatnai encourages the Jews to proceed; and they finish the temple in the sixth year of Darius, 13-15. They dedicate the temple, 16-18; keep the Passover, 19-21, and the feast of unleavened bread, 22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1. *In the house of the rolls*** **בֵּית סִפְרָיָא** beith siphraiya, the house of the books, the king's library. This is the first time we hear of a library.

**Verse 2. *At Achmetha*** Ecbatana in India, whither it is probable all the records of Cyrus had been carried. This was a sort of summer residence for the kings of Persia.

**Verse 3. *The height thereof threescore cubits*** This was much larger than the temple of Solomon. This was sixty cubits high, and sixty cubits broad; whereas Solomon's was only twenty cubits broad, and thirty cubits high.

**Verse 4. *Three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber*** We have noticed this kind of building before, three courses of stones, and then a course of strong balk; and this continued to the square of the building.

***And let the expenses be given*** Cyrus had ordered wood to be cut at Libanus, and conveyed to Joppa at his expense; but it does not appear that he furnished the other expenses of the building, for we have already seen that the Jews contributed for the defraying of all others. But it appears that he provided at his own expense the sacrifices and offerings for the temple. See Ezra 6:9.

**Verse 6. *Be ye far from thence*** Do not interrupt the Jews in their building; but, on the contrary further them all in your power.

**Verse 10. *And pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.*** Even heathens believed that offerings made in their behalf to the God of the

Jews would be available. And this principle has had considerable influence in certain states where there was even a form of religion established by the law, to induce them to tolerate other forms, that the state might have the benefit of their prayers.

**Verse 11. *Let timber be pulled down*** Whether this refers to the punishment of hanging and gibbeting of whipping at a post, or of empaling, is not quite clear. In China they tie culprits to posts; and the executioner cuts them open while alive, takes out their bowels, etc. Empaling thrusting a sharp stake through the body till it comes out at the side of the neck, or hanging, seems to be intended here.

***Let his house be made a dunghill*** Let it be reduced to ruins, and never more used, except for the most sordid and unclean purposes.

**Verse 14. *According to the commandment of the God of Israel*** He first gave the order, and stirred up the hearts of the following Persian kings to second that order.

***Of Cyrus*** This sovereign gave his orders for the rebuilding of the temple about A.M. 3468.

***And Darius*** Darius Hystaspes confirmed the above orders, A. M. 3485.

***And Artaxerxes*** Artaxerxes Longimanus sent Ezra to Judea with new privileges, A.M. 3547. With the permission of the same king, Nehemiah came to Judea in 3550. The writer recapitulates the different sovereigns who favored the Jews after the Babylonish captivity. See Calmet.

**Verse 15. *This house was finished*** The sixth year of Darius mentioned here was about A.M. 3489, twenty years after the foundation had been laid by Zerubbabel, under the reign of Cyrus.

**Verse 17. *Twelve he-goats*** This was a sin-offering for every tribe.

**Verse 18. *And they set the priests*** With this verse the Chaldee or Aramitic part of this chapter ends.

**Verse 20. *The Levites were purified together*** They were all ready at one time to observe the proper rites and ceremonies, and had no need of having a second passover, which was appointed by the law for those who had

been accidentally defiled, or were at a distance from the tabernacle. See 2 Chronicles 30:3.

**Verse 21. *And all such as had separated themselves*** These were the proselytes who had embraced the Jewish religion by having mingled with the Jews in their captivity. This proves that there the poor captives had so acted according to the principles of their religion, that the heathens saw it, and walked in the light of the Lord with them. A good example is very persuasive; and particularly so when founded on pure principles.

**Verse 22. *Turned the heart of the king of Assyria*** I am of Calmet's mind, that king of Assyria is here put for king of Persia. Cyrus and his successors possessed all the rights and estates of the ancient kings of Assyria, and therefore the same monarch may be styled king of Assyria as well as king of Persia.

DARIUS had a very high character, as a wise, just, and merciful prince. To strengthen his title to the crown, he married two of the daughters of Cyrus, and, no doubt, to show his affection to this family, he the more cheerfully confirmed the edict which Cyrus had made in favor of the Jews.

## CHAPTER 7

*In the seventh year of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, Ezra goes up to Jerusalem; and with him certain of the priests, Levites, porters, and Nethinim: his character, 1-10. The letter and decree of Artaxerxes in behalf of the Jews, 11-26. Ezra's thanksgiving to God for these mercies, 27, 28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1. *In the reign of Artaxerxes*** This was Artaxerxes Longimanus, the seventh of whose reign chronologers place A.M. 3547, sixty-eight years after Cyrus had sent back Zerubbabel. — Calmet. See the introduction.

***Son of Seraiah*** Either this could not have been Seraiah the high priest, who had been put to death by Nebuchadnezzar one hundred and twenty-one years before this time, or the term son here must signify only his descendants, or one of his descendants. Were it otherwise, Ezra must now be at least one hundred and twenty-two years of age, supposing him to have been born in the year of his father's death; if, indeed Seraiah the high priest was his father; but this is evidently impossible. In this place there are only sixteen generations reckoned between Ezra and Aaron, but in 1 Chronicles 6:3, 4, etc., there are not less than twenty-two. We must therefore supply the deficient generations from the above place, between Amariah son of Meraioth, 1 Chronicles 6:7, and Azariah the son of Johanan, 1 Chronicles 6:10. There are other discrepancies relative to genealogies in these historical books which it would be useless to investigate. On these differences much has been already said in different parts of this comment.

**Verse 6. *A ready scribe*** סופר מחיר *sopher machir* does not merely signify a speedy writer or an excellent penman, but one who was eminently skillful in expounding the law. In this sense the word γραμματευσ, scribe, is repeatedly used in the New Testament, and we find that both in the Old and New Testament it had the same signification.

The Syriac gives the sense of the word by translating [P] sophro chocimo, a wise scribe, or expounder.

**Verse 8. *He came to Jerusalem in the fifth month*** From the following verse we learn that Ezra and his company set off from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and thus we find they were upwards of four months on their journey. They could not travel fast, as they were a great company, composed in part of the aged and infirm, besides multitudes of women and children. They appear also to have taken a circuitous route. See on Ezra 8:24-32,

**Verse 10. *Ezra had prepared his heart*** Here is a fine character of a minister of God: He prepares, **הִכִּי** hechin, he fixes, purposes, and determines, **לִבְבוֹ** lebabo, with his heart-with all his powers and affections, to seek the law of God, and to do it himself, that he may be properly qualified to teach its statutes and judgments to Israel.

**Verse 12. *Artaxerxes, king of kings*** This letter, from the beginning of this verse to the end of ver. 26, {Ezra 7:12-26,} is in the Aramitic or Chaldee language.

This title of the king would, in Persian, run thus: [P] Ardsheer shahinshah, or [P] padshah, “Ardsheer, king of kings;” “great or supreme king, or emperor.”

**Verse 13. *Their own free-will*** None shall be forced either to go or to stay. He who loves his God will avail himself of this favorable opportunity.

**Verse 14. *His seven counsellors*** It is very likely that the privy counsel of the king consisted of seven persons simply. The names of these seven counsellors or chamberlains may be found in the book of Esther, Esther 1:10.

**Verse 16. *And all the silver and gold*** The king and his counsellors had already made a present to the house of the God of Israel; and Ezra is now empowered to receive any contribution which any of the inhabitants of the province of Babylon may think proper to give.

**Verse 18. *After the will of your God*** He gave them the fullest liberty to order every thing according to their own institutions, binding them to no form or mode of worship.

**Verse 22. *A hundred talents of silver*** The talent of silver was 450ú.

***A hundred measures of wheat*** A hundred cors; each cor was a little more than seventy-five gallons, one quart, and a pint, wine measure.

***A hundred baths of wine*** Each bath was seven gallons and five pints.

**Verse 23. *Why should there be wrath*** As he believed he was appointed by the Almighty to do this work, he therefore wished to do it heartily, knowing that if he did not, God would be displeased, and that the kingdom would be cut off from him or his posterity.

**Verse 24. *It shall not be lawful to impose toll*** As these persons had no private revenues, it would have been unreasonable to have laid them under taxation.

**Verse 26. *Whether it be unto death*** These include almost every species of punishment which should be inflicted on culprits in any civilized state. With this verse the Chaldee part of this chapter ends.

**Verse 28. *And I was strengthened*** In what the king decreed he saw the hand of God; he therefore gave him the praise, and took courage. There is a most amiable spirit of piety in these reflections. Ezra simply states the case; shows what the king had determined, and tells what he said; and then points out the grand agent in the whole business-it was the Lord God of his fathers. Thus God had put it into the king's heart to beautify the house of Jehovah; and, as that house was built for the salvation of the souls of men, he gives God praise for putting it into the king's heart to repair it: he who loves God and man will rejoice in the establishment of the Divine worship, because this is the readiest way to promote the best interests of man.

## CHAPTER 8

*The genealogy of the chief persons who went with Ezra from Babylon, 1-14. He gathers them together at Ahava; and finding among them no Levites, he sends confidential persons to the river of Ahava, who return with many Levites and Nethinim, 15-20. He proclaims a fast at Ahava for Divine protection on their journey, 21-23. He delivers to the care of the priests etc., the silver, gold, and sacred vessels, that they might carry them to Jerusalem, and deliver them to the high priest, 24-30. They depart from Ahava, and come to Jerusalem, 31, 32. The vessels are weighed and the weight registered, 33, 34. They offer burnt-offerings to God, 35; deliver the king's commissions to his lieutenants, by whom they are furthered in their work, 36.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 2. Gershom** One of the descendants of Phinehas, son of Eliazar.

**Verse 3. Of the sons of Shechaniah** There were three of this name; the second is mentioned Ezra 8:6, and the third Ezra 10:2. They were all different persons, as may be seen from their fathers' houses.

**Verse 15. The river that runneth to Ahava** Ahava was a river itself, which is supposed to be the same that is called Diava or Adiava, in the province of Adiabene; and perhaps the place whence the people of Ava came who were brought by the king of Assyria to Palestine, 2 Kings 17:24.

**None of the sons of Levi.** None that were simply Levites. He found priests, and they were sons of Levi; but no Levites that were not priests.

**Verse 17. At the place Casiphia** The most judicious commentators are agreed that by Casiphia, the Caspian mountains, between Media and Hyrcania, are intended; where, probably, the Nethinim were employed in working silver mines: כֶּסֶף keseph, from which the word comes, signifies silver.



**Verse 22. *I was ashamed to require a band*** He had represented God, the object of his worship, as supremely powerful, and as having the strongest affection for his true followers: he could not, therefore, consistently with his declarations, ask a band of soldiers from the king to protect them on the way, when they were going expressly to rebuild the temple of Jehovah, and restore his worship. He therefore found it necessary to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer, that they might have from Him those succours without which they might become a prey to their enemies; and then the religion which they professed would be considered by the heathen as false and vain. Thus we see that this good man had more anxiety for the glory of God than for his own personal safety.

**Verse 26. *Silver vessels a hundred talents*** That is, The weight of all the silver vessels amounted to one hundred talents; not that there were one hundred vessels of silver, each a talent in weight.

Reckoning in round sums, 650 talents of silver at ú450 the talent, amount to ú292, 500 sterling. Silver vessels, 100 talents, amount to ú45, 000; gold, 100 talents, at ú7, 000 per talent, amount to ú700, 000 independently of the 20 basons of gold, amounting to 1000 drachms. Now the golden drachm or daric was worth about 1ú. 2s., therefore these basons were worth ú1100; the whole amounting to ú1, 038, 600 sterling. But these different weights and coins are variously computed; some making the silver talent only ú353 11s. 10 ´d., and the talent of gold ú5057 15s. 1 ´d., calculations which I have elsewhere introduced.

***Two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold***— What these were we cannot tell. The Syriac translates [P] nechoso corinthio toba, to be vessels of the best Corinthian brass; so called from the brass found after the burning of Corinth by Lucius Mummius, which was brass, copper, gold, and silver, all melted together, as is generally supposed. But it was probably some factitious metal made there, that took the polish and assumed the brightness of gold, and because of its hardness was more durable. There is still a certain factitious metal of this kind, made among the Asiatics. I have seen this metal often made; it is as bright and fine as gold, takes a most exquisite polish, and will scarcely tarnish. I have kept this exposed to every variation of the air, even among old iron, brass, copper, etc., for twenty years together, without being scarcely at all oxidized. It requires

much art in the making, but the constituent materials are of small value. Vessels of this metal, because of their lustre and durability for ornamental and domestic uses, are in many respects more valuable than gold itself. The only difficulty is to get at first the true color, which depends on the degree of heat, and the time employed in fusion; but there are, however, proper rules to ascertain them. This metal is widely different from the or molu of France and England, is less expensive, and much more valuable.

**Verse 35. *Twelve bullocks for all Israel*** Though of tribes there were only Judah and Benjamin, yet they offered a bullock for every tribe, as if present. There can be little doubt that there were individuals there from all the twelve tribes, possibly some families of each; but no complete tribe but those mentioned above.

**Verse 36. *The king's lieutenants*** אַחַשְׁדַּרְפֵּי achashdarpney: this is generally understood to mean lieutenant or deputy, and is probably of Persian origin, though here greatly corrupted. The Vulgate renders it regis satrapis, to the satraps of the king, which is the Persian [P] satrab. A viceroy in Persian is [P] soubah-dar; viceroys, [P] soubahdaran. [P] darafreen signifies a person in whom one has confidence; and [P] achi is an epithet of a vizir. These two words conjoined will make nearly that of the text. But I do not give any of these etymologies with confidence. Other words might be proposed as candidates, but where there is so little certainty, conjecture is useless. Were it necessary a dissertation might be written on the Persian words, and Persian forms of speech, in this and the two following books; but probably after my toil few of my readers would thank me for my pains.

## CHAPTER 9

*The princes inform Ezra that many of the people now settled in the had married heathen wives; and several of the rulers were principal offenders in this thing, 1, 2. He is greatly afflicted, 3, 4. His prayer to God on thus account, 5-15.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. *The people of Israel*** These were they who had returned at first with Zerubbabel, and were settled in the land of Judea and whom Ezra found on his arrival to be little better than the Canaanitish nations from whom God had commanded them ever to keep separate.

**Verse 2. *Hath been chief in this trespass.*** They who are the first men have been the most capital offenders; so VIRGIL, AEn. ix. 783:—

*Unus homo, vestris, o cives, undique septus  
Aggeribus, tantas strages impune per urbem Ediderit?  
Juvenum primos tot miserit orco?*

*“Shall one, and he enclosed within your walls,  
One rash imprisoned warrior, vanquish all?  
Calm you look on, and see the furious foe  
Plunge crowds of heroes to the shades below!”*

PITT.

The first of the Trojan youth were the chief, the most illustrious; so we say the first men of the kingdom for the nobles, etc.

**Verse 3. *I rent my garment and my mantle*** The outer and inner garment, in sign of great grief. This significant act is frequently mentioned in the sacred writings, and was common among all ancient nations.

***Plucked off the hair*** Shaving the head and beard were signs of excessive grief; much more so the plucking off the hair, which must produce exquisite pain. All this testified his abhorrence, not merely of the act of

having taken strange wives, but their having also joined them in their idolatrous abominations.

**Verse 4. *Those that had been carried away*** Those that had returned long before with Zerubbabel; see Ezra 9:1.

***Until the evening sacrifice.*** The morning sacrifice was the first of all the offerings of the day, the evening sacrifice the last. As the latter was offered between the two evenings, i.e., between sunset and the end of twilight, so the former was offered between break of day and sunrise. Ezra sat astonished-confounded in his mind, distressed in his soul, and scarcely knowing what to do. He probably had withdrawn himself into some sequestered place, or into some secret part of the temple, spending the time in meditation and reflection.

**Verse 5. *Fell upon my knees*** In token of the deepest humility. Spread out my hands, as if to lay hold on the mercy of God. We have already had occasion to explain these significant acts.

**Verse 6. *I am ashamed and blush*** God had been so often provoked, and had so often pardoned them, and they had continued to transgress, that he was ashamed to go back again to the throne of grace to ask for mercy in their behalf. This is the genuine feeling of every reawakened backslider.

**Verse 8. *And now for a little space*** This interval in which they were returning from servitude to their own land.

***Grace hath been showed*** God has disposed the hearts of the Persian kings to publish edicts in our favor.

***To leave us a remnant to escape*** The ten tribes are gone irrecoverably into captivity; a great part even of Judah and Benjamin had continued beyond the Euphrates: so that Ezra might well say, there was but a remnant which had escaped.

***A nail in his holy place*** Even so much ground as to fix our tent-poles in.

***May lighten our eyes*** To give us a thorough knowledge of ourselves and of our highest interest, and to enable us to re-establish his worship, is the reason why God has brought us back to this place.

**A little reviving** We were perishing, and our hopes were almost dead; and, because of our sins, we were sentenced to death: but God in his great mercy has given us a new trial; and he begins with little, to see if we will make a wise and faithful use of it.

**Verse 10. *What shall we say after this?*** Even in the midst of these beginnings of respite and mercy we have begun to provoke thee anew!

**Verse 11. *Have filled it from one end to another*** The abominations have been like a sweeping mighty torrent, that has increased till it filled the whole land, and carried every thing before it.

**Verse 13. *Hast punished us less than our iniquities*** Great, numerous, and oppressive as our calamities have been, yet merely as temporal punishments, they have been much less than our provocations have deserved.

**Verse 15. *Thou art righteous*** Thou art merciful; this is one of the many meanings of the word צדק צדק tsedek; and to this meaning St. Paul refers, when he says, God declares his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, Romans 3:25. See the note there.

***We remain yet escaped*** Because of this righteousness or mercy.

***In our trespasses*** We have no righteousness; we are clothed and covered with our trespasses.

***We cannot stand before thee because of this.*** The parallel place, as noted in the margin, is Psalm 130:3: If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Every man must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ: but who shall stand there with joy? No man against whom the Lord marks iniquities. There is a reference here to the temple service: the priests and Levites stood and ministered before the Lord, but they were not permitted to do so unless pure from all legal pollution; so no man shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ who is not washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Reader, how dost thou expect to stand there?

## CHAPTER 10

*The people are greatly afflicted by Ezra's prayer, 1. Shechaniah proposes that all who have taken strange wives should put them away, and the children they had by them; and make a covenant to serve God, 2-4. Ezra is encouraged; and make a proclamation to collect the people, to find who had transgressed, 5-8. They come together on the twentieth day of the ninth month, 9. Ezra exhorts them to put away their strange wives, 10. The people agree to it, and require time, 11-14. This being granted, the business is concluded, 15.*

**Verse 5. *And they***

**Verse 17. *The first day of the first month*** So they were three whole months in examining into this affair, and making those separations which the law required.

**Verse 19. *They gave their hands*** They bound themselves in the most solemn manner to do as the rest of the delinquents had done; and they made all acknowledgment of their iniquity to God by offering each a ram for a trespass-offering.

**Verse 25. *Moreover of Israel*** That is, as Calmet observes, simple Israelites, to distinguish them from the priests, Levites, and singers, mentioned in Ezra 10:18, 23, 24.

**Verse 44. *Some of them had wives by whom they had children.*** This observation was probably intended to show that only a few of them had children; but it shows also how rigorously the law was put in execution.

According to a passage in Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, Ezra offered a paschal lamb on this occasion, and addressed the people thus: "And Ezra said to the people, This passover is our Savior and our Refuge; and if ye will be persuaded of it, and let it enter into your hearts, that we are to humble ourselves to him in a sign, and afterwards shall believe in him, this place shall not be destroyed for ever, saith the Lord of Hosts: but if ye will not believe in him, nor hearken to his preaching, ye shall be a laughing-stock to the Gentiles." -Dial. cum Tryphone, sec. 72.

This passage, Justin says, the Jews, through their enmity to Christ, blotted out of the book of Ezra. He charges them with cancelling several other places through the same spirit of enmity and opposition.

In the Hebrew text this and the following book make but one, though sometimes Nehemiah is distinguished as the second book of Esdras. In the Masoretic enumeration of sections, etc., both books are conjoined. This may be seen at the end of Nehemiah. I can add nothing of importance to the character of Ezra, which has already been given so much in detail in the introduction to this book.

Corrected, March, 1828. — A. CLARKE.



# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

OF

## NEHEMIAH

IN the introduction to the book of Ezra, we have already seen those wonderful interferences of Divine Providence in which Nehemiah bore so large a share. Dr. Prideaux, with his usual perspicuity, has interwoven the whole of the transactions of the mission of Nehemiah with that part of the Persian history with which they are connected; which I shall give, as in the preceding book, in his own words. He connects this book, as it ought to be, with the book of Ezra. See before.

“He who succeeded Ezra in the government of Judah and Jerusalem was Nehemiah, a very religious and most excellent man; one that was nothing behind his predecessor, saving his learning and great knowledge in the law of God. He came to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, about four hundred and forty-five years before Christ; and by a commission from him, superseded that of Ezra, and succeeded him in the government of Judah and Jerusalem. He had in that commission, by an express clause therein inserted, full authority to repair the walls, and set up the gates of Jerusalem; and to fortify it again in that manner as it was before it was dismantled and destroyed by the Babylonians. He was a Jew, whose ancestors had formerly been citizens of Jerusalem; for there, he says, was the place of his fathers’ sepulchres: but as to the tribe or family which he was of, no more is said but only that his father’s name was Hachaliah, who seems to have been of those Jews who, having gotten good settlements in the land of their captivity, chose rather to abide in them than return into their own country, when leave was granted for it. It is most likely that Hachaliah was an inhabitant of the city of Shushan, and that it was his dwelling there that gave his son an opportunity of gaining an advancement in the king’s palace; for he was one of the cup-bearers of

King Artaxerxes, which was a place of great honor and advantage in the Persian court, because of the privilege it gave him of being daily in the king's presence, and the opportunity which he had thereby of gaining his favor for the obtaining of any petition which he should make to him; and that, especially, since the times of his attendance always were when the king was making his heart merry with the wine which he served up to him; for this is the best opportunity with all men for the obtaining any boon that shall be desired of them, because they are always then in the best humor for complying: it was at such a time that he asked the government of Judea, and obtained it. And by the like advantages of his place, no doubt it was that he gained those immense riches which enabled him for so many years, out of his own private purse only, to live in his government with that splendor and expense as will be hereafter related, without burdening the people at all for it; and no doubt it was by the favor of Queen Esther, as being of the same nation and people with her, that he attained so honorable and advantageous a preferment in that court. However, neither the honor nor advantage of this place, nor the long settlement of his family out of his country, could make him forget his love for it, or lay aside that zeal which he had for the religion of his forefathers, who had formerly dwelt in it. For though he had been born and bred in a strange land, yet he had a great love for Sion, and a heart thoroughly set for the advancing the prosperity of it, and was in all things a very religious observer of the law of his God; and therefore, when some came from Jerusalem, and told him of the ill state of that city, how the walls of it were still in many places broken down, and the gates of it in the same demolished state as when burnt with fire by the Babylonians, and that, by reason thereof, the remnant of the captivity that dwelt there lay open, not only to the incursions and insults of their enemies, but also to the reproach and contempt of their neighbors, as a mean and despicable people, and that they were in both these respects in great grief and affliction of heart; the good man, being suitably moved with this representation, applied himself in fasting and prayer unto the Lord his God, and earnestly supplicated him for his people Israel, and the place which he had chosen for his worship among them. And having thus implored the Divine mercy against this evil, he resolved next to make his application to the king for the redressing of it, trusting in God for the inclining of his heart thereto; and therefore, when his turn came next to wait in his office, the king, observing his countenance

to be sad, which at other times used not to be so, and asking the cause thereof, he took this opportunity to lay before him the distressed state of his country; and, owning this to be the cause of great grief to him, prayed the king to send him there to remedy it. And by the favor of Queen Esther he had his petition granted unto him; for it being particularly marked in the sacred text that the queen was sitting with the king when Nehemiah obtained this grant, sufficiently indicates that her favor was assisting to him herein; (See my note on this passage. — A. C.) and accordingly a royal decree was issued out for the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem; and Nehemiah was sent thither with it, as governor of the province of Judea, to put it into execution; and to do him the more honor, the king sent a guard of horse with him, under the command of some of the captains of his army, to conduct him safely to his government. And he wrote letters to all the governors on this side the river Euphrates, to further him in the work on which he was sent; and also gave his orders to Asaph, the keeper of the forests in those parts, to allow him as much timber out of them as should be needed for the finishing of it. However, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Samaritans, and other neighboring nations round, did all they could to hinder him from proceeding therein; and to this they were excited, not only by the ancient and bitter enmity which those people bore to the whole Jewish nation, because of the different manners and different religions they professed; but most especially at this time because of their lands; for during the time that the Jews were in captivity, these nations, having seized their lands, were forced to restore them on their return; for which reason they did all they could to oppose their settlement, hoping that, if they could be kept low, they might find an opportunity, some time or other, of resuming the prey they had lost. But Nehemiah was not at all discouraged at this; for having, on his arrival at Jerusalem, made known to the people the commission with which he was sent, he took a view of the ruins of the old walls, and immediately set about the repairing of them, dividing the people into several companies, and assigning to each of them the quarter where they were to work, but reserving to himself the superintendence and direction of the whole, in which he labored so effectually that all was finished by the end of the month Elul, within the compass of thirty-two days, notwithstanding all manner of opposition that was made against him, both from within and without; for within several false prophets, and other

treacherous persons, endeavored to create obstructions; and from without Sanballat the Horonite, Tobias the Ammonite, Geshem the Arabian, and several others, gave him all the disturbance they were able, not only by underhand dealings, and treacherous tricks and contrivances, but also by open force; so that while part of the people labored in carrying on the building, the other part stood to their arms, to defend themselves against those who had any designs upon them. And all had their arms at hand, even while they worked, to be ready at a signal given to draw together at any part where the enemy should be discovered to be coming upon them: and by this means they secured themselves against the attempts and designs of their enemies till the work was brought to a conclusion. And when they had thus far finished the walls and set up the gates, a public dedication of them was celebrated with great solemnity by the priests and Levites, and all the people. The burden which the people underwent in the carrying on of this work, and the incessant labor which they were forced to undergo to bring it to so speedy a conclusion being very great, and such as made them faint and groan under it; to revive their drooping spirits, and make them the more easy and ready to proceed in that which was farther to be done, care was taken to relieve them from a much greater burden, the oppression of usurers, which they at that time lay under, and had much greater reason to complain of; for the rich, taking advantage of the necessities of the poor, had exacted heavy usury of them, making them pay the centesimal for all moneys lent them; that is, one per cent. for every month, which amounted to twelve per cent. for the whole year: so that they were forced to mortgage their lands, and sell some of their children into servitude, to have wherewith to buy bread for the support of themselves and families; which being a manifest breach of the law of God, given by Moses, (for that forbids all the race of Israel to take usury of any of their brethren,) Nehemiah, on his hearing of this, resolved forthwith to remove so great an iniquity; in order whereto he called a general assembly of all the people, where, having set forth unto them the nature of the offense, how great a breach it was of the Divine law, and how heavy an oppression upon their brethren, and how much it might provoke the wrath of God against them, he caused it to be enacted by the general suffrage of that whole assembly, that all should return to their brethren whatsoever had been exacted of them upon usury, and also release all the lands,

vineyards, olive-yards, and houses, which had been taken of them upon mortgage on this account.

“And thus Nehemiah, having executed the main of the end for which he obtained the favor of the king to be sent to Jerusalem, appointed Hanani and Hananiah to be governors of the city, and returned again unto him into Persia; for a time had been set him for his return again to court, when he first obtained to be sent from thence on this commission; which, as expressed in the text, plainly imports a short time, and not that of twelve years, after which he again went unto the king, as some interpret it. And his having appointed governors of the city as soon as the walls were built evidently implies that he then went from thence, and was absent for some time; for, had he still continued at Jerusalem, he would not have needed any deputies to govern the place. And farthermore, the building of the walls of Jerusalem being all for which he prayed his first commission; when this was performed, he seems to have needed a new authority before he could go on to other proceedings, which were necessary for the well settling of the affairs of that country. But on his return to the king, and having given him an account how all things stood in that province, and what farther was needful to be done for the well regulating of it, he soon obtained to be sent back again to take care thereof: and the shortness of his absence seems to have been the cause why there is no mention of it in the text, though the particulars I have mentioned seem sufficiently to imply it.

“Nehemiah, being returned from the Persian court with a new commission, in the twenty-first year of Artaxerxes, [B. C. 444,] forthwith set himself to carry on the reformation of the Church, and the state of the Jews, which Ezra had begun; and took along with him the advice and direction of that learned and holy scribe in all that he attempted in this work.

“The first thing that he did was to provide for the security of the city, which he had now fortified, by settling rules for the opening and shutting of the gates, and keeping watch and ward on the towers and walls: but finding Jerusalem to be but thinly inhabited, and that to make this burden more easy there needed more inhabitants to bear their share with them in it, he projected the thorough re peopling of the place: in order to which he prevailed first with the rulers and great men of the nation to agree to build them houses there, and dwell in them; and then others following their

example, offered themselves voluntarily to do the same; and of the rest of the people every tenth man was taken by lot, and obliged to come to Jerusalem, and there build them houses, and settle themselves and their families in them. And when the city was fortified, and all that had their dwellings in it were there well secured by walls and gates against the insults of their enemies, and the incursions of thieves and robbers, who before molested them, all willingly complied; by which means the houses, as well as the walls and gates, being again rebuilt, and fully replenished with inhabitants, it soon after this received its ancient lustre, and became again a city of great note in those parts.

“Nehemiah, finding it necessary to have the genealogies of the people well investigated and clearly stated, next examined into that matter; and this he did, not only for the sake of their civil rights, that all knowing of what tribe and family they were, they might be directed where to take their possessions; but more especially for the sake of the sanctuary, that none might be admitted to officiate, even as Levites, who were not of the tribe of Levi; or as priests, that were not of the family of Aaron. And therefore, for the true settling of this matter, search was made for the old registers; and, having among them found a register of the genealogies of those who came up at first from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, he settled this matter according to it; adding such also as came up, and expunging others whose families were extinct. And this caused the difference that is between the accounts we have of these genealogies in Ezra and Nehemiah: for in the second chapter of Ezra we have the old register made by Zerubbabel; and in the seventh of Nehemiah, from the sixth verse to the end of the chapter, a copy of it as settled by Nehemiah with the alterations I have mentioned. Ezra, having completed his edition of the law of God, and written it out fairly and clearly in the Chaldean character, this year, on the feast of trumpets, publicly read it to the people of Jerusalem. This feast was celebrated on the first of Tisri, the seventh month of the Jews’ ecclesiastical year, and the first of their civil year. Their coming out of Egypt having been in the month Nisan, from that time the beginning of the year, in all ecclesiastical matters, was reckoned among them from the beginning of that month, which happened about the time of the vernal equinox; but in all civil matters, such as contracts and bargains, they still continued to go by the old form, and began their year from the first of Tisri

which happened about the time of the autumnal equinox, as all other nations of the East then did; and all instruments and writings relating to contracts and bargains, or other civil matters, were dated according to this year, and all their jubilees and Sabbatical years began with it; and, therefore, reckoning it their new-year's-day, they celebrated it with a festival; and this festival being solemnized by the sounding of trumpets, from the morning of that day to the end of it, to proclaim and give notice to all of the beginning of the new year, it was from thence called the feast of trumpets. To celebrate this feast, the people assembled from all parts of Jerusalem; and understanding that Ezra had finished his revisal of the law, and written out a fair copy of it, they called upon him to have it read to them; when a scaffold or large pulpit was erected in the largest street of the city, where most of the people might stand to hear it. Ezra ascended into it, with thirteen other principal elders; and having placed six on his right hand, and seven on his left, he stood up in the midst of them; and having blessed the Lord, the great God, he began to read the law out of the Hebrew text; and while he read it in this language, thirteen other of the Levites, whom he instructed for this purpose, rendered it period by period into Chaldee, which was then the vulgar language of the people, giving them the meaning of every particular part; thus making them understand it: thus the holy scribe, with these assistants, continued from morning till noon, reading and explaining the law of God unto the people in such a manner as suited their low capacities. But it being a festival day, and the dining hour approaching, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the rest that had been assisting, dismissed them to dinner, to eat and drink, and rejoice before the Lord. The remainder of the day, because it was thus consecrated to be kept holy unto Him: but the next morning they assembled again, in the same place; and Ezra and his assistants went on farther to read and to explain the law of God in the same manner as they had done the day before; and when they came to the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, wherein is written the law of the feast of tabernacles, and had explained to them the obligation they were under to observe it, and that the fifteenth day of that month was the day appointed for the beginning of it, he excited an eager desire in all the people to fulfill the law of God in this particular; and proclamation was therefore made through all Judah, to give notice of the festival, and to warn them all to be present at Jerusalem on that day for the observing of it. Accordingly they went thither at the time prescribed; and,

as they were instructed by the law of God, prepared booths, made of the branches of trees, and kept the festival in them, through the whole seven days of its continuance, in so solemn a manner as had not been observed before since the days of Joshua to this time. Ezra, taking the advantage of having the people assembled in so great a number, and so well disposed towards the law of God, went on with his assistants farther to read and explain in the same way as he had done on the two former days; and this he did from the first to the last day of the festival, till they had gone through the whole law; by which the people, perceiving in how many things they had transgressed the law of God through ignorance, (for till now the law of God had never been read since their return from Babylon,) expressed much trouble of heart, being much grieved for their sins, and exceedingly terrified with the fear of God's wrath for the punishment of them. Nehemiah and Ezra, finding them so well disposed, applied themselves to make the best improvement they could of it for the honor of God, and the interests of religion; and, therefore, proclaimed a fast to be held the day but one after the festival was ended, to which having called all the people while the sense of these things was fresh in their minds, excited them to make a solemn confession of their sins before God, and also to enter into a solemn vow and covenant with God to avoid them for the future. The observances which they chiefly obliged themselves to in this covenant were: Firstly, Not to make intermarriages with the Gentiles, either by giving their daughters to them, or by taking any of their daughters to themselves. Secondly, To observe the Sabbaths and Sabbatical years. Thirdly, To pay their annual tribute to the temple for the repairing of it, and finding all the necessaries for the carrying on of the public service in it. And Fourthly, To pay the tithes and first-fruits to the priests and Levites. And these particulars being thus named in this covenant shows us that they were the laws of God which they had been neglectful of since their return from the captivity. It being their ignorance which led them into these transgressions, and this ignorance having been occasioned by their not having heard the law of God read to them; to prevent this for the future, they had from this time the most learned of the Levites and scribes that were skilled in the law, to read it to them in every city; which no doubt was at first done by gathering the people together in the most wide street, where all might the better hear it; but the inconvenience of this being soon felt, especially in the winter and stormy seasons of the year, they



erected houses or tabernacles to meet in, and these were the original synagogues among them. That they had no synagogues before the Babylonish captivity is plain, not only from the silence of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but also from several passages in them, which evidently prove that there were none in those days; for it is a common saying, among the Jews, that where there is no book kept of the law, there can be no synagogue; for the chief service of the synagogue being the reading of the law to the people, where there was no law, there certainly could be no synagogue. Many texts of Scripture tell us that the book of the law was very rare through all Judah before the Babylonish captivity. When Jehoshaphat sent teachers through all Judah to instruct the people in the law of God, they carried the law with them; which they need not have done if there had been copies of the law in those cities where they went, which there would have been had there been synagogues in them, it being the same absurdity to suppose a synagogue without a book of the law, as to suppose a parish church without a copy of the Bible in it; and therefore as this proves the want of the law through all Judah, so it proves the want of synagogues in them also. And when Hilkiah found the law in the temple, neither he nor the king Josiah would have been surprised at it, had books of the law been common in those times. Their behavior on that occasion sufficiently proves that they had never seen it before, which could not have been the case had there been any copies of it to be found among the people; and if there were no copies of the law at that time among them, there could then be most certainly no synagogues for them to resort to for the hearing of it read. From hence it plainly follows that there could be no synagogues among the Jews till after the Babylonish captivity; and it is most probable that Ezra's reading to them the law, and the necessity which they perceived there was of having it oftener read to them, was the occasion of their erecting them after their captivity in the manner I have related; and most learned men are of this opinion, and some of the Jews themselves say as much.

“Nehemiah, after having held the government of Judah twelve years, returned to the Persian court, either recalled thither by the king, or else going thither to solicit a new commission after the expiration of the former, [32 Artax. B. C. 433.] During all the time that he had been in the government he managed it with great justice, and supported the dignity of

his office, through these whole twelve years, with a very expensive and hospitable magnificence; for there sat at his table every day a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides strangers who came to Jerusalem from among the heathen nations round about them; for when occasion brought them thither, if they were of any quality, they were always invited to the governor's house, and there hospitably and splendidly entertained; so that there were provided for Nehemiah's table every day one ox, six choice sheep, and fowls and kine, with all other things in proportion, which must have been a great expense; yet all this he bore through the whole twelve years, out of his own private purse, without burdening the province at all for it, or taking any part of that allowance which before was raised by other governors to support them in their station; which argues his great generosity, as well as his great love and tenderness to the people of his nation, in thus easing them of this burden; and also his vast wealth, in being able to do so. The office which he had been in at court gave him the opportunity of amassing great riches, and he thought he could no better expend them than in the service of his country, and by doing all he could to promote its true interest in Church and state; and God prospered him in the work, according to the great zeal with which he labored in it.

“Nehemiah, on his return to the Persian court, in the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes, [B. C. 428,] having tarried there about five years in the execution, as it may be supposed, of his former office, at length obtained permission from the king to be sent back to Jerusalem with a new commission. The generality of chronologers as well as commentators on this part of Scripture make his going back there to have been much sooner; but considering the many and great corruptions which he tells us in the thirteenth chapter the Jews had run into during his absence, it cannot be conceived how, in less than five years' time, they could have grown to such a height among them. He had been twelve years in reforming what was amiss among them, and Ezra had been thirteen years doing the same before him; and they had brought their reformation to such a state of stability, that a little time would not have been sufficient to have unhinged it. It is indeed expressed in our English version, that Nehemiah came back from the Persian court to Jerusalem, after certain days; but the Hebrew word **יָמִין** yamin, which is there rendered days, signifies also years; and is in a great many places of the Hebrew Scriptures so used. About this time

lived Malachi the prophet: the greatest of the corruptions he charged the Jews with are the same as those they had run into in the time of Nehemiah's absence; and therefore it is most probable that in this time his prophecies were delivered. It is certain that the temple was all finished, and every thing restored in it, before this time, for there are passages in his prophecies which clearly suppose it; for he does not charge the Jews with not restoring the temple, but their neglect of what pertained to the true worship of God in it. But at what time after the restoration of the temple it was that he wrote his prophecies, is nowhere stated; and therefore we have only conjecture about it, and I know of no conjecture that can place it with more probability than in the time I have mentioned.

“Many things having gone wrong among the Jews during the absence of Nehemiah, as soon as he was again settled in the government, he applied himself with his accustomed zeal to correct them. That which he first took notice of was a great profanation which had been introduced into the temple for the sake of Tobiah the Ammonite. This man, though he had made two alliances with the Jews, (for Johanan his son had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah, who was one of the chief managers in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, under the direction of the governor, who himself had married the daughter of Shecaniah the son of Arah, another great man among the Jews,) yet being an Ammonite, he bore a national hatred to all who were of the race of Israel; and therefore, envying their prosperity, did the utmost he could to obstruct Nehemiah in all that he did for the good of that people, and confederated with Sanballat, their greatest enemy, to carry on this purpose. However, by reason of the alliances I have mentioned, he had many correspondents among the Jews, who were favourers of him, and acted insidiously with Nehemiah on this account; but he, being aware of their devices, withstood and baffled them all, so long as he continued in Jerusalem. But when he went from thence to the Persian court, Eliashib the high priest was prevailed upon, being one in the confederacy and alliance with Tobiah, to allow and provide for him lodging within the temple itself. In order for which he removed the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of corn, the new wine, and the oil, which had been commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the offerings of the priests, out of the chambers where they used to be laid; and to make out of them

one large apartment for the reception of this heathen stranger. It is doubted by some whether this Eliashib were Eliashib the high priest, or only another priest of that name; for he is named in the text, where this is related of him, by the title only of priest, and is there said to have the oversight of the chambers in the house of God; from whence it is argued that he was only chamberlain of the temple, and not the high priest, who was above such an office. But the oversight of the chambers of the house of God may import the whole government of the temple, which belonged to the high priest only; and it is not easily to be conceived how any one less than the absolute governor of the whole temple could make such an innovation in it. Besides, Eliashib the high priest has no character in Scripture with which such a procedure can be said to be inconsistent. By what is said in the book of Ezra, Ezra 10:18, it appears that the pontifical family was in his time grown very corrupt; and there is no act of his mentioned, either in Ezra or Nehemiah, except only his assisting in the repairing of the wall of Jerusalem. Had he done any thing else worthy of memory in the reforming of what was amiss, either in Church or state, in the times of Ezra or Nehemiah, it may be presumed mention would have been made of it in the books written by them. The silence of him in both these books, as to any good act done by him, is a sufficient proof that there was none to be recorded; for the high priest being head of the Jewish Church, had he borne any part with those two good men, when they labored so much to reform that Church, it is utterly impossible that it should have been passed over in their writings, where they give an account of what was done in that reformation. What Jeshua his grandfather did, in concurrence with Zerubbabel the governor, and Haggai and Zechariah the prophets, in the resettling of the Church and state of the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, is all recorded in Scripture; and had Eliashib done any such thing in concurrence with Ezra and Nehemiah, we may be certain it would have been recorded also.

“Putting all this together, it appears most likely that it was Eliashib the high priest who was the author of this great profanation of the house of God. What was done, however, the text tells us, Nehemiah immediately withstood, as soon as he returned to Jerusalem; for, overruling what the high priest had ordered to be done by the authority which he had as

governor, he commanded all the household stuff of Tobiah to be cast out, and the chambers to be cleansed and restored to their former use.

“The reading of the law to the people having been settled by Nehemiah, so as to be constantly carried on at certain stated times ever since it was begun under his government by Ezra, (probably on every Sabbath day,) when in the course of their lessons they came to chap. xxiii. of Deuteronomy, where it is commanded that a Moabite or an Ammonite should not come into the congregation of the Lord even to the tenth generation for ever; Nehemiah, taking advantage of it, separated all the mixed multitude from the rest of the people, that thereby it might be known with whom a true Israelite might lawfully marry; for neither this law, nor any other of the like nature, is to be understood as excluding any, of whatever nation, from entering into the congregation as a proselyte, and becoming a member of their Church. Neither did the Jews so interpret it; for they freely received into their religion all who would embrace it, and on their conversion admitted them to all its rights and privileges, and treated them in all respects as true Israelites, excepting only in the case of marriage; and therefore this phrase in the text, of not entering into the congregation even to the tenth generation, must be understood to imply no more than a prohibition not to be married with them till then; and thus all the Jewish doctors expound it.

“Among other corruptions that grew up during the absence of Nehemiah, one especially to be noticed was, the neglect of not carrying on the daily service of the house of God in the manner it ought; for the tithes, which were to maintain the ministers of the temple in their offices and stations, either being embezzled by the high priest or other rulers under him, or else subtracted by the laity, and not paid at all; for want of them the Levites and singers were driven from the temple, every one to his own house, there to seek for a subsistence some other way. This abuse the governor, whose piety led him always to attend to the public worship, could not be long without taking notice of, and when he had thoroughly informed himself of

Sabbath should be duly observed, and made many good orders for the preventing of the profanation of it, and caused them all to be put into effectual execution. But though all these things are mentioned in one chapter, they were not all done at one time; but this good man brought them about as opportunities best served for the success of effecting them. In the same year [B. C. 425] in which Nehemiah went again to his government of Judea, from the Persian court, i. e., in the fourth year of the eighty-seventh Olympiad, Plato, the famous Athenian philosopher, was born, who came the nearest to the truth in Divine matters of any of the heathens; for, having in his travels to the East, (whither he went for his improvement in knowledge,) conversed with the Jews, and got some insight into the writings of Moses, and their other sacred books, he learned many things from them which the other philosophers could not attain unto, and therefore he is said by Numenius to be none other than Moses speaking Greek; and many of the ancient fathers speak of him to the same purpose.”

With this book the general historical books of the Old Testament end; and the succeeding accounts of the Jewish people must be sought partly in the Apocryphal books, and in Josephus; but nowhere with so much perspicuity as in the remaining volumes of the industrious and judicious author of *The Connected History of the Old and New Testaments*, from which the reader has already had such copious extracts.

# THE BOOK

OF

## NEHEMIAH

### Chronological Notes relative to this Book

Year from the Creation, according to Archbishop Usher, whose system of chronology is the most generally received, 3558. — Year before the birth of Christ, 442. — Year before the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 446. — Year of the Julian period, 4268. — Year since the flood of Noah, according to the English Bible, 1902. — Year of the Cali Yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 2656. — Year from the vocation of Abram, 1476. — Year from the destruction of Troy, 739. — This we collect from three passages in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, (who flourished in the Augustan age,) which state that an interval of four hundred and thirty-two years elapsed from the destruction of Troy to the building of Rome. — Year from the foundation of Solomon's temple, 565. — Year since the division of Solomon's monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 529. — Year of the era of Iphitus, king of Elis, who reestablished the Olympic games, three hundred and thirty-eight years after their institution by Hercules, or about eight hundred and eighty-four years before the commencement of the Christian era, 439. — This epoch is famous in chronological history, as every thing previous to it seems involved in fabulous obscurity. — Year since Coroebus won the prize at Olympia, a town of Elis in Peloponnesus, (being the twenty-eighth Olympiad after their re-establishment by Iphitus,) 331. — Third year of the eighty-third Olympiad. — The epoch of the Olympiads commenced according to the accurate and learned computations of some of the moderns, exactly seven hundred and seventy-six years before the Christian era, in the year of the Julian period 3938, and twenty-three years before the building of Rome. N. B. The Olympic games were celebrated at the time of the full moon which

immediately followed the day of the summer solstice; therefore the Olympiads were not of equal length, because the time of the full moon differs about eleven days every year; and for that reason the Olympiads sometimes began the next day after the solstice, and at other times four weeks after. — Year of the Varronian or generally received era of the building of Rome, 308. This computation was used by the Romans in the celebration of their secular games. — Year from the building of Rome, according to Cato and the *Fasti Consulares*, 307. Dionysius of Halicarnassus follows this account in his *Roman Antiquities*. — Year from the building of Rome, according to Polybius the historian, (a native of Megalopolis in Peloponnesus, and son of Lycortas,) 306. — Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, (the first Roman who wrote a history of his own country, from the age of Romulus to the year of Rome 536,) 302. — Year of the era of Nabonassar, a king of Babylon after the division of the Assyrian monarchy, 302. — Year since the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, 276. — Year from the destruction of Solomon's temple by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, 143. — Year since the publication of the famous edict of Cyrus, king of Persia, empowering the Jews to rebuild their temple, 90. The commencement of this epoch was synchronical with the termination of the seventy years during which the Jews were under the dominion of the Babylonians. — Year since the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome, which put an end to the regal government of the Romans, 63. The consular government immediately followed the expulsion of the Tarquins. — Year before the celebrated Peloponnesian war, 16. This war began on the seventh of May, four hundred and thirty-one years before the Christian era; and continued twenty-seven years between the Athenians and the inhabitants of Peloponnesus, with their allies. — Year before the commencement of the era of the Seleucidae, 134. This era was named after Seleucus, one of the captains of Alexander the Great, surnamed Nicator, or The Conqueror. The year in which he conquered Babylon (*viz.* 312 B. C.) is called the first year of this era. — Year before the formation of the famous Achaean league, 165. — Year before the commencement of the first Punic war, 182. The Arundelian marbles are said to have been composed in the first year of this war. — Year before the fall of the Macedonian empire, 278. — Year before the extinction of the reign of the Seleucidae in Syria, on the conquest of that country by Pompey, 381. — Year before



the commencement of the era of the Roman emperors, 415. The year in which the famous battle of Actium was fought is the first year of this era. — Year of Archidamus, king of Lacedaemon, and of the family of the Proclidae or Eurypontidae, 24. — Year of Plistoanax, king of Lacedaemon, and of the family of the Eurystheuidae or Agidae, 21. This king was general of the Lacedaemonian armies in the Peloponnesian war. N. B. The kings of the Lacedaemonians of the families of the Proclidae and the Eurysthenidae sat on the throne together for several hundred years; viz., from 1102 B. C. to about 200 B. C. — Year of Perdiccas II. the eleventh king of Macedon, 9. — Year of Artaxerxes, surnamed Macrochir (μακροχειρ) or Longimanus because his arms were so long that when standing erect, his hands reached down to his knees, 20. — Roman Consuls, T. Quintius Capitolinus the fourth time, and Agrippa Furius. During this consulship the AEqui and Volsci came near to the gates of Rome, and were defeated.

Eminent men who were contemporary with Nehemiah; upon the supposition that his birth happened about 500 B. C., and his death about 420 B. C.

Acron, a physician of Agrigentum; flourished 459 B. C. — AEschylus, the tragic poet of Athens; born, 525 B. C., died 456 B. C., at the age of 69. — Alcidas the philosopher; flourished 424 B. C. — Anaxagoras, a Clazomenian philosopher; born B. C. 500., died 428 B. C., at the age of 72. — Aristarchus the tragic poet of Tegea in Areadia; flourished about 454 B. C. — Aristides, the Athenian; flourished about 480 B. C. — Aristophanes, the comic poet; said to have flourished about 434 B. C. — L. Furius Camillus, celebrated Roman; born 445 B. C., and died 365 B. C., aged 80, after he had been five times dictator, once censor, three times interrex, twice a military tribune, and obtained four triumphs. — Charandas, who gave laws to the people of Thurium; died 446 B. C. — Charon, a historian of Lampsacus; flourished about 479 B. C. — L. Q. Cincinnatus, a celebrated Roman; flourished about 460 B. C. — Cossus, a Roman who killed Volumnius, king of Veii, and obtained the Spolia Opima, A. U. C. 317, B. C. 437. — Cratinus, the comic writer; born 528 B. C., died 431 B. C., at the age of 97. — Democritus, the philosopher; born 470 B. C., died 361 B. C., at the advanced age of 109. — Empedocles, a philosopher, poet, and historian, of Agrigentum in Sicily; flourished about 444 B. C. —

Epicharmus, a poet and Pythagorean philosopher of Sicily, who, according to Aristotle and Pliny, added the two letters  $\chi$  and  $\theta$  to the Greek alphabet; flourished 440 B. C., and died in the 90th year of his age. — Euctemon, the astronomer; flourished about 431 B. C. — Eupolis, a comic poet of Athens; flourished about 435 B. C. — Euripides, the tragic poet, born at Salamis the day on which the army of Xerxes was defeated by the Greeks; torn to pieces by dogs, 407 B. C., in the 73d year of his age. — Georgias, a celebrated sophist and orator; born 508 B. C., died 400 B. C., at the advanced age of 108. — Hellanicus, the Greek historian; born at Mitylene, 496 B. C., died 411 B. C., in the 85th year of his age. — Herodicus, a physician surnamed Gymnastic; flourished 443 B. C. — Herodotus, a celebrated historian of Halicarnassus; born 484 B. C., read his history to the council of Athens, and received public honors, in the 39th year of his age, 445 B. C. — Hippocrates, a celebrated physician of Cos; born 460 B. C., died 361 B. C., nearly 100 years of age. — Isoarates, the orator; born 437 B. C., died about 338 B. C., aged 99. — Leocrates, an Athenian general; flourished about 460 B. C. — Lysias, the orator; born 459 B. C., died 378 B. C. — Melissus, the Samian philosopher; flourished about 440 B. C. — Meton, the astrologer and mathematician; flourished about 432 B. C. — Peticles, the celebrated minister of Athens; born 499 B. C., died of the plague about 429 B. C. — Phidias, a celebrated statuary of Athens; died 432 B. C. — Pindar, a celebrated lyric poet of Thebes; born 521 B. C., died 435 B. C., at the age of 86. — Plato, the Greek poet, called the prince of the middle comedy; flourished about 454 B. C. — Protagoras, a Greek philosopher; died at a very advanced age, about 400 B. C. — Socrates, one of the most celebrated philosophers of all antiquity; born 470 B. C., died 400 B. C., aged 70. — Sophocles, a celebrated tragic poet of Athens, educated in the school of AEschylus; born 497 B. C., died 406 B. C., at the age of 91. — Thucydides, a celebrated Greek historian; born at Athens 471 B. C., died 391 B. C., in his 80th year. — Xenophon, the celebrated general, historian, and philosopher; born 449 B. C., died 359 B. C., aged 90. — Zeuxis, a celebrated painter; flourished about 468 B. C.

## CHAPTER 1

*Account of Nehemiah, 1. His inquiry about the Jews that had returned from their captivity, and concerning the state of Jerusalem, of which he receives the most discouraging information, 2, 3. He is greatly affected; fasts and prays, 4. His prayer and confession to God, 5-11.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. *The words of Nehemiah*** That this book was compiled out of the journal or memoranda made by Nehemiah himself, there can be no doubt: but that he was not the compiler is evident from several passages in the work it. self. As it is written consecutively as one book with Ezra, many have supposed that this latter was the author: but whoever compares the style of each, in the Hebrew, will soon be convinced that this is not correct; the style is so very different, that they could not possibly be the work of the same person.

It is doubtful even whether the Nehemiah who is mentioned Ezra 2:2, who came to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, be the same with him who is the reputed author of this book. By the computation of the best chronologists, Zerubbabel came to Jerusalem in A. M. 3468; and Nehemiah, who is here mentioned, did not come before the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, which falls in with A. M. 3558, ninety years after: and as his account here is carried down to A. M. 3570, nearly twenty years later, he must at his death have been about a hundred and thirty, allowing him to have been only twenty years old at the time that Zerubbabel went up to Jerusalem. This is by no means likely, as this would make him the king's cupbearer when he was upwards of a hundred years of age! It seems, therefore, evident that the Nehemiah of Ezra cannot be the same with the reputed author of this book, and the cup-bearer of the Persian king.

***Son of Hachaliah*** Of what tribe or lineage he was, we cannot tell: this is all we know of his parentage. Some suppose he was a priest, and of the house of Aaron, on the authority of 2 Mac. i. 18, 21; but this is but slender

evidence. It is likely he was of a very eminent family, if not of the blood royal of Judah, as only persons of eminence could be placed in the office which he sustained in the Persian court.

***The month Chisleu*** Answering to a part of our November and December.

***Twentieth year*** That is, of Artaxerxes, A. M. 3558, B. C. 446.

***Shushan the palace***— The ancient city of Susa; called in Persian [P] Shuster: the winter residence of the Persian kings.

**Verse 2. *I asked them concerning the Jews*** Josephus gives a probable account of this business: “Nehemiah, being somewhere out of Susa, seeing some strangers, and hearing them converse in the Hebrew tongue, he went near; and finding they were Jews from Jerusalem, he asked them how matters went with their brethren in that city, and what was their state?” And the answer they gave him is, in substance, that recorded in the text; though with several aggravations in Josephus. — Joseph. Ant. lib. xi., c. 5.

**Verse 3. *The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down*** This must refer to the walls, which had been rebuilt after the people returned from their captivity: for it could not refer to the walls which were broken down and levelled with the dust by Nebuchadnezzar; for to hear of this could be no news to Nehemiah.

**Verse 4. *And mourned certain days*** From the month Chisleu to the month Nisan; about four months from the time he received the above information, till the time that Artaxerxes noticed his grief, chap. 2:1. All this time he probably spent in supplication to God; waiting for a favorable opening in the Divine providence. Every good work is not to be undertaken hastily; prayer and watchfulness are necessary to its completion. Many good works have been ruined by making haste.

**Verse 5. *Lord God of heaven*** What was, before the captivity, Jehovah, God of hosts or armies.

***Great*** Able to do mighty things. Terrible-able to inflict the heaviest judgments.

**Verse 6. *Let thine ear*** Hear what we say and confess. Thine eyes open-see what we suffer.

**Verse 7. *Have not kept thy commandments*** The moral precepts by which our lives should be regulated.

***Statutes*** What refers to the rites and ceremonies of thy religion.

***Judgments*** The precepts of justice relative to our conduct to each other.

**Verse 8. *Thy servant Moses*** See the parallel places in the margin, and the notes there. Though in an enemy's country, and far from the ordinances of God, Nehemiah did not forget the law: he read his Bible well, and quotes correctly.

**Verse 11. *Mercy in the sight of this man.*** Favour before the king, Ahasuerus. He seems then to have been giving him the cup.

***For I was the king's cup-bearer. The king's butler, (the Persians call him [A] saky,)*** which gave him the opportunity of being frequently with the king; and to be in such a place of trust, he must be in the king's confidence. No Eastern potentate would have a cup-bearer with whom he could not trust his life, poison being frequently administered in this way. This verse seems to have been a mental prayer, which Nehemiah now put up as he was delivering the cup into the king's hand.

## CHAPTER 2

*Artaxerxes, observing the sorrow of Nehemiah, inquires into the cause, 1, 2. Nehemiah shows him the cause, and requests permission to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, 3-6. The king grants it, and gives him letters to the governors beyond the river, 7, 8. He sets out on his journey, 9. Sanballat and Tobiah are grieved to find he had got such a commission, 10. He comes to Jerusalem; and, without informing any person of his business, examines by night the state of the city, 11-16. He informs the priests, nobles, and rulers, of his design and commission, 17, 18. The design is turned into contempt by Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, 19. Nehemiah gives them a suitable answer, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. *Month Nisan*** Answering to a part of our March and April.

***I took up the wine*** It is supposed that the kings of Persia had a different cup-bearer for each quarter of the year, and that it had just now come to Nehemiah's turn.

**Verse 2. *Then I was very sore afraid.*** Probably the king spoke as if he had some suspicion that Nehemiah harboured some bad design, and that his face indicated some conceived treachery or remorse.

**Verse 3. *Let the king live for ever*** Far from wishing ill to my master, I wish him on the contrary to live and prosper for ever. AELIAN, Hist. Var. lib. i. c. 32, uses the same form of speech in reference to Artaxerxes Mnemon, one of the Persian kings, βασιλευ αρταξερξη, δι' αιωνος βασιλευοις, "O King Artaxerxes, may you reign for ever," when speaking of the custom of presenting them annually with an offering of earth and water; as if they had said, May you reign for ever over these!

**Verse 4. *So I prayed to the God of heaven.*** Before he dared to prefer his request to the king, he made his prayer to God, that his suit might be

acceptable: and this he does by mental prayer. To the spirit of prayer every place is a praying place.

**Verse 5. *The city of my fathers' sepulchres*** The tombs of the dead were sacred among the ancients, and nothing could appear to them more detestable than disturbing the ashes or remains of the dead. Nehemiah knew that in mentioning this circumstance he should strongly interest the feelings of the Persian king.

**Verse 6. *The queen also sitting by him*** Who probably forwarded his suit. This was not Esther, as Dean Prideaux supposes, nor perhaps the same Artaxerxes who had taken her to be queen; nor does שגל shegal signify queen, but rather harlot or concubine, she who was chief favourite. The Septuagint translate it *παλλακη*, harlot; and properly too. See the introduction.

***I set him a time.*** How long this time was we are not told; it is by no means likely that it was long, probably no more than six months or a year; after which he either returned, or had his leave of absence lengthened; for in the same year we find he was made governor of the Jews, in which office he continued twelve years, viz., from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, chap. 5:14. He then returned to Susa; and after staying a short time, had leave to return to rectify some abuses that Tobiah the Ammonite had introduced into the temple, chap. 13:6, 7, and several others of which the people themselves were guilty. After having performed this service, it is likely he returned to the Persian king, and died in his office of cup-bearer; but of this latter circumstance we have no mention in the text.

**Verse 8. *Asaph the keeper of the king's forest*** הפרדס *hapardes of the paradise of the king. This I believe is originally a Persian word; it frequently occurs in Arabic*, [A] ferdoos, and in Greek, *παραδεισος*, and in both signifies a pleasant garden, vineyard, pleasure garden, and what we call a paradise.

Above the hall of audience, in the imperial palace at Dehli, the following Persian couplet is inscribed:—

[P]

*“If there be a paradise on the face of the earth,  
this is it, this is it, this is it.”*

Thus we find that the word is applied to denote splendid apartments, as well as fine gardens; in a word, any place of pleasure and delight. The king's forest mentioned in the text might have been the same to Artaxerxes, as the New Forest was to William the Conqueror, or Windsor Forest to the late amiable sovereign of the British people, GEORGE the THIRD.

*And the king granted me, etc.* This noble spirited man attributes every thing to God. He might have said, I had been long a faithful servant to the king; and he was disposed, in reward of my fidelity, to grant my request; but he would not say so: “He granted my request, because the good hand of my God was upon me.” God favored me, and influenced the king's heart to do what I desired.

**Verse 10. *Sanballat the Horonite*** Probably a native of Horonaim, a Moabite by birth, and at this time governor of the Samaritans under the king of Persia.

***Tobiah the servant*** He was an Ammonite; and here, under the Persian king, joint governor with Sanballat. Some suppose that the Sanballat here mentioned was the same who persuaded Alexander to build a temple on Mount Gerizim in favor of the Samaritans. Pelagius thinks there were two governors of this name.

**Verse 13. *The dragon well*** Perhaps so called because of the representation of a dragon, out of whose mouth the stream issued that proceeded from the well.

***Dung port*** This was the gate on the eastern side of the city, through which the filth of the city was carried into the valley of Hinnom.

**Verse 14. *The gate of the fountain*** Of Siloah.

***The king's pool*** Probably the aqueduct made by Hezekiah, to bring the waters of Gihon to the city of David. See 2 Chronicles 32:30.

**Verse 15. *By the brook*** Kidron.



***By the gate of the Valley*** The valley through which the brook Kidron flowed. It was by this gate he went out; so he went all round the city, and entered by the same gate from which he had gone out.

**Verse 16. *The rulers knew not whither I went*** He made no person privy to his design, that he might hide every thing as much as possible from their enemies till he had all things in readiness; lest they should take measures to defeat the work.

**Verse 18. *Then I told them*** He opened to them his design and his commission.

**Verse 19. *Geshem the Arabian*** Some chief of the Arabs contiguous to Samaria, who had joined with Sanballat and Tobiah to distress the Jews, and hinder their work.

***Will ye rebel against the king?*** This they said in order to raise jealousies in the king's mind, and induce him to recall his ordinance.

**Verse 20. *Ye have no portion, nor right*** To be a citizen of Jerusalem was a high honor; and they would not permit those who did not belong to the tribes of Israel to dwell there. Zerubbabel gave the same answer to the Samaritans, Ezra 4:3.

## CHAPTER 3

*The names of those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem; and the part assigned to each person, 1-32.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *Eliashib the high priest*** It was right that the priests should be first in this holy work; and perhaps the sheep gate which is mentioned here is that by which the offerings or sacrifices were brought into the temple.

***They sanctified it*** As they began with the sacred offering as soon as they got an altar built, it was proper that the gate by which these sacrifices entered should be consecrated for this purpose, i. e., set apart, so that it should be for this use only.

**Verse 3. *The fish gate*** We really know scarcely any thing about these gates-what they were, why called by these names, or in what part of the wall situated. All plans of Jerusalem, its temple, walls, and gates, are mere works of conjecture; and yet how learnedly have some men written on all these subjects!

**Verse 7. *The throne of the governor*** His house, and the place where he dispensed justice and judgment. Previously to the days of Nehemiah, Jerusalem was governed by a deputy from the Persian king; (see chap. 5:15;) but after this time they were governed by governors and judges chosen from among themselves.

**Verse 8. *Goldsmiths***. From the remotest period of the history of the Jews they had artists in all elegant and ornamental trades; and it is also evident that goldsmiths, apothecaries, and merchants were formed into companies in the time of Nehemiah.

***Apothecaries*** Rather such as dealt in drugs, aromatics, spices, etc., for embalming, or for furnishing the temple with the incense consumed there.

**Verse 9. *Ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.*** Probably the city was divided into two parts; one for Judah, and the other for Benjamin, each having its proper governor. Rephaiah mentioned here was one of these governors, and Shallum, mentioned ver. 12, was the other. There were other rulers or governors of particular country or village districts.

**Verse 11. *Repaired the other piece*** That which was left by Jedaiah after he had repaired the wall opposite to his own house. Probably some of the principal people were obliged to repair those parts of the wall opposite to their own dwellings. Perhaps this was the case generally.

**Verse 12. *The son of Halohesh*** Or, the son of the Enchanter: conjectured to be thus named from having the art to charm serpents.

***The ruler of the half part*** See on ver. 9.

**Verse 13. *The inhabitants of Zanoah*** This was a town in the tribe of Judah. Joshua 15:34.

**Verse 14. *Beth-haccerem*** A village or town in the tribe of Benjamin. See Jeremiah 6:1.

**Verse 15. *The pool of Siloah*** This is probably the same as that mentioned by the evangelists.

***The stairs that go down from the city of David.*** Jerusalem being built on very uneven ground, and some hills being taken within the walls; there was a necessity that there should be in different places steps by which they could ascend and descend: probably similar to what we see in the city of Bristol.

**Verse 16. *The pool that was made*** Calmet supposes that this was the reservoir made by Hezekiah, when besieged by Sennacherib, 2 Chronicles 32:4.

***The house of the mighty.*** Probably a place where a band of soldiers was kept, or the city guard.

**Verse 19. *The going up to the armoury*** This was either a tower that defended the angle where the two walls met; or the city arsenal, where shields, spears, etc., were kept to arm the people in time of danger.

**Verse 20. *Earnestly repaired*** He distinguished himself by his zeal and activity.

**Verse 22. *The priests, the men of the plain.*** Some of the officers of the temple, particularly the singers, dwelt in the plain country round about Jerusalem, chap. 12:28; and it is likely that several of the priests dwelt in the same place.

**Verse 28. *The horse gate*** The place through which the horses passed in order to be watered; It was near the temple. Some rabbins suppose that in order to go to the temple, a person might go on horseback to the place here referred to, but then was obliged to alight, as a horse could pass no farther. Horses were never very plentiful in Jerusalem.

**Verse 32. *The goldsmiths and the merchants.*** The word **הצרפיים** hatsorephim may signify smiths, or persons who worked in metals of any kind; but it is generally understood to mean those who worked in gold. I have already observed, that the mention of merchants and goldsmiths shows that these persons were formed into bodies corporate in those ancient times. But these terms are differently rendered in the versions. The Vulgate is the same as ours, which probably our translators copied: aurifices et negociatores. The Syriac is, goldsmiths and druggists. The Arabic, smelters of metal and porters. The Septuagint, in some copies, particularly in the Roman edition, and in the Complutensian, Antwerp, and Paris Polyglots, have **οι χαλκεις και οι μεταβολι**, smiths and merchants; but in other copies, particularly the London Polyglot, for **μεταβολοι** we find **ροποπωλαι**, seller of shields. And here the learned reader will find a double mistake in the London Polyglot, **ροποπωλαι** for **ροποπωλαι**, and in the Latin version scruta for scuta, neither of which conveys any sense.

## CHAPTER 4

*Sanballat and Tobiah mock the Jews, and endeavor to prevent the completing of the wall, 1-3. Nehemiah prays against them, and the people complete one half of the wall, 4-6. The Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites, conspire together, and come to fight against the Jews, 7, 8. The Jews commend themselves to God, and determine to fight for their lives and liberties; on hearing of which their enemies are disheartened, 9-16. The Jews divide themselves into two bands; one half working, and the other standing ready armed to meet their enemies. Even the workmen are obliged to arm themselves, while employed in building, for fear of their enemies, 17, 18. Nehemiah uses all precautions to prevent a surprise; and all labor with great fervor in the work, 19-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 2. *The army of Samaria*** As he was governor, he had the command of the army, and he wished to excite the soldiers to second his views against Nehemiah and his men.

***What do these feeble Jews?*** We may remark here, in general, that the enemies of God's work endeavor by all means to discredit and destroy it, and those who are employed in it. 1. They despise the workmen: What do these feeble Jews? 2. They endeavor to turn all into ridicule: Will they fortify themselves? 3. They have recourse to lying: If a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. 4. They sometimes use fair but deceitful speeches; see chap. 6:2, etc.

**Verse 4. *Turn their reproach upon their own head*** A prayer of this kind, understood literally, is not lawful for any Christian. Jesus, our great master, has said, "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you." Such sayings as the above are excusable in the mouth of a Jew, under severe irritation. See the next verse.

**Verse 5. *Let not their sin be blotted out*** These are the most terrible imprecations; but probably we should understand them as declaratory, for

the same form of the verb, in the Hebrew, is used as precative and imperative. Turn their reproach-Their reproach shall be turned. Give them for a prey-They shall be given for a prey. Cover not their iniquity-Their iniquity shall not be covered. Let not their sin be blotted out-Their sin shall not be blotted out. All who know the genius of the Hebrew language, know that the future tense is used to express all these senses. Besides, we may rest assured that Nehemiah's curses, or declaration of God's judgments, had respect only to their bodies, and to their life: not to their souls and the world to come. And then they amount to no more than this: What a man soweth that he shall reap.

**Verse 6. *For the people had a mind to work.*** The original is very emphatic: **וַיְהִי לֵב לֵאמֹת לַעֲשׂוֹת** vayehi leb leam laasoth, "For the people had a heart to work." Their hearts were engaged in it; and where the heart is engaged, the work of God goes on well. The whole of this 6th verse is omitted by the Septuagint.

**Verse 7. *The walls of Jerusalem were made up*** That is, they were made up to the half height of the wall; for the preceding verse seems to intimate that the whole wall was thus far built; not half of the wall completed, but the whole wall built to half its height.

**Verse 9. *We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch*** The strongest confidence in the protection and favor of God does not preclude the use of all or any of the means of self-preservation and defense which his providence has put in our power. While God works in us to will and to do, we should proceed to willing, through the power he has given us to will; and we should proceed to action, through the power he has given us to act. We cannot will, but through God's power; we cannot act, but through God's strength. The power, and the use of it, are two distinct things. We may have the power to will, and not will; and we may have the power to do, and not act: therefore, says the apostle, seeing God has wrought in you these powers, see that **YOU WORK OUT YOUR OWN** salvation, with fear and trembling.

**Verse 10. *The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed*** They worked both day and night, scarcely ever putting off their clothes, except for the purpose of being washed, ver. 21, 23.

**Much rubbish** The ruins they were obliged to clear away, before they could dig the foundation for a new wall: and in this labor they were nearly exhausted; see chap. 5:15.

**Verse 12. *From all places whence ye shall return unto us*** This verse is extremely difficult. Our translators have supplied the words, they will be upon you, which have nothing correspondent in the Hebrew. The Septuagint have given a good sense, **αναβαινουσιν εκ παντων των τοπων εφ' ημας**, They come up from all places against us. The sense appears to be this: the Jews which dwelt among the Samaritans, etc., came often to Nehemiah from all quarters, where they sojourned, and told him the designs of his enemies against him: therefore, he set people with their swords, spears, and bows, to defend the walls. It is probable that instead of **תשובו** tashubu, “ye shall return,” we should read **חשבו** chashebu, “they designed or meditated.” This word is very similar to the other, and makes the sense very clear. “The Jews who dwelt among them told us frequently, from all places, what they designed against us.” For this reading Houbigant, Michaelis and DathÇ contend. But this various reading is not found in any MS., and is not countenanced by any of the versions. See ver. 15.

**Verse 14. *Be not ye afraid of them*** Are they more terrible or stronger than God?

**Fight for your brethren** Your own countrymen, who worship the same God, and are come from the same stock; your sons, whom they wish to slay or lead into captivity; your daughters and wives, whom they wish to deflower and defile; and your houses, which they wish to seize and occupy as their own. They had every thing at stake; and therefore they must fight pro aris et focus, for their religion, their lives, and their property. A people thus interested, who once take up the sword, can never be conquered.

There is an address made to the Greeks by their leader in AEschylus, Pers. ver. 402, similar to this, to excite them against the Persians:—

ω παιδες ἑλληνων, ιτε, ελευθερουτε πατριδ',  
ελευθερουτε δε παιδας, γυνιακας, θεων ρε πατρων εδη,  
θηκας τε προγονων· νυν υπερ παντων αγων.

“ — *Sons of the Greeks, go on!  
Free now your country, and your children free;  
Your wives, the temples of your fathers' gods,  
And dear abodes of farthest ancestors: —  
Now strike the blow for all!*” J. B. B. C.

**Verse 15. *Their counsel to naught*** The word counsel used here countenances the emendation in the 12th verse.

**Verse 16. *Half-wrought in the work*** This is no unusual thing, even in the present day, in Palestine: people sowing their seed are often attended by an armed man, to prevent the Arabs from robbing them of their seed, which they will not fail to do if not protected.

***Habergeons*** In the Franco-Gallic, *hautbergon* signifies a coat of mail; but as in Teutonic [Teutonic] signifies the neck, and [Teutonic], to cover or defend; it may be considered rather as signifying a breastplate, or armor for the breast.

**Verse 17. *With one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.*** That is, he had his arms at hand, and was as fully prepared to fight as to work. So OVID, *Epist. xi.*, Canace Macario, ver. 1:—

*Si qua tamen caecis errabunt scripta lituris,  
Oblitus a dominae caede libellus erit:  
Dextra tenet calamum; strictum tenet altera ferrum:  
Et jacet in gremio charta soluta meo.*

*If streaming blood my fatal letter stain,  
Imagine, ere you read, the writer slain.  
One hand the sword, and one the pen employs,  
And in my lap the ready paper lies.*

DRYDEN.

By this mode of speech Canace does not intimate to her brother Macarius, that she actually held the sword in one hand while she held the pen in the other, but that she had it ready to slay herself as soon as she had written the epistle.

**Verse 20. *Ye hear the sound of the trumpet*** As the walls were very extensive, and the workmen consequently much scattered, their enemies



might easily attack and destroy them successively, he therefore ordered them all to work as near to each other as they could; and himself, who was everywhere surveying the work, kept a trumpeter always with him, who was to sound when the enemy approached; and all were instantly to run to the place where they heard the sound.

**Verse 22.** *Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem* The country people were accustomed, after their day's labor, to return to their families; now being so formidably threatened, he obliged them all to sleep  
t

Becke: We put never of our clothes, so much as to wash ourselves. — 1549.

Cardmarden: We put never of our clothes no more than the other did they harness, save only because of the water. — 1566.

This shows how all interpreters have been puzzled with this vexatious clause.

THE reading from Deuteronomy Rossi's MS., given above, is the most likely to be the true one, because it gives a good sense, which cannot be found in the Hebrew text as it now stands. The general meaning is sufficiently evident; they worked nearly day and night, only had their hours by turns for repose; this did not permit them time sufficient to undress themselves in order to take regular sleep, therefore they only put off their clothes when they were obliged to get them washed.

## CHAPTER 5

*The people complain that they are oppressed and enthralled by their richer brethren, 1-3. Nehemiah calls them to account; upbraids them for their cruelty; and obliges them to swear that they will forgive the debts, restore the mortgaged estates, and free their servants, 4-13. Nehemiah's generosity and liberality, 14-17. The daily provision for his table, 18, 19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 2. *We, our sons, and our daughters, are many*** Our families are larger than we can provide for; we are obliged to go in debt; and our richer brethren take advantage of our necessitous situation, and oppress us. The details which are given in the next verse are sufficiently plain.

**Verse 3. *Because of the dearth.*** About the time of Zerubbabel, God had sent a judicial dearth upon the land, as we learn from Haggai, Haggai 1:9, etc., for the people it seems were more intent on building houses for themselves than on rebuilding the house of the Lord: "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it is come to little; because of mine house that is waste; and ye run, every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brought forth; and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands." This dearth might have been continued, or its effects still felt; but it is more likely that there was a new dearth owing to the great number of people, for whose support the land that had been brought into cultivation was not sufficient.

**Verse 4. *We have borrowed money*** This should be read, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute on our lands and vineyards. They had a tax to pay to the Persian king in token of their subjection to him, and though it is not likely it was heavy, yet they were not able to pay it.

**Verse 5. *We bring in to bondage our sons*** The law permitted parents to sell their children in times of extreme necessity, Exodus 21:7.

**Verse 7. *Ye exact usury*** This was expressly contrary to the law of God; and was doubly cruel at this time, when they were just returning out of the land of their captivity, and were suffering from the effects of a dearth. Some think that it was about the time of a Sabbatical year, when their land must have lain at rest without cultivation, and during which they were expressly commanded not to exact any debt. Deuteronomy 15:2.

***I set a great assembly against them.*** Brought all these delinquents before the rulers of the people.

**Verse 9. *Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God*** If ye wish to accredit that religion ye profess which comes from the God of justice and mercy; should you not, in the sight of the heathen, abstain from injustice and cruelty? Can they credit your profession, when they see such practices? The inconsistent conduct of some professors of religion does much harm in the Church of God.

**Verse 11. *Also the hundredth part of the money*** Houbigant contends, 1. That the word מֵאָה meath, which we and the Vulgate translate one hundredth part, never means so anywhere; and 2. That it would have answered no end to have remitted to people so distressed merely the one hundredth part of the money which had been taken from them by usury. He understands מֵאָה meath as signifying the same as מִן אֵת min eth, contracted into מֵאֵת meeth, a preposition and demonstrative particle joined together, also a part FROM THE money. Neither the Syriac, Septuagint, nor Arabic acknowledges this hundredth part. Some think that the hundredth part is that which they obliged the poor debtors to pay each month, which would amount to what we would call twelve per cent. interest for the money lent, or the debt contracted. See the introduction.

**Verse 13. *Also I shook my lap*** This was a significant action frequent among the Hebrews; and something of the same nature was practiced among other nations. “When the Roman ambassadors entered the senate of Carthage, they had their toga gathered up in their bosom. They said, We carry here peace and war; you may have which you will. The senate answered, You may give which you please. They then shook their toga,

and said, We bring you war. To which all the senate answered, We cheerfully accept it." See Livy. lib. xxi., cap. 18; and see Calmet.

**Verse 14. *I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor.***

From what is related here, and in the following verse, we find that the table of the governor was always supplied by the people with bread and wine; and, besides, they had forty shekels per diem for their other expenses. The people were also greatly oppressed by the servants and officers of the governor; but, during the twelve years that Nehemiah had been with them, he took not this salary, and ate none of their bread. Nor were his servants permitted to take or exact any thing from them. Having such an example, it was scandalous for their chiefs, priests, and nobles, thus to oppress an afflicted and distressed people.

**Verse 16. *Neither bought we any land*** Neither he nor his officers took any advantage of the necessities of the people, to buy their lands, etc. He even made his own servants to work at the wall.

**Verse 17. *A hundred and fifty of the Jews*** He kept open house, entertained all comers; besides having one hundred and fifty Jews who had their food constantly at his table, and at his expense. To be able to bear all these expenses, no doubt Nehemiah had saved money while he was cup-bearer to the Persian king in Susa.

**Verse 18. *One ox, and six choice sheep*** This was food sufficient for more than two hundred men.

***Once in ten days store of all sorts of wine*** It is supposed that every tenth day they drank wine; at all other times they drank water; unless we suppose the meaning of the phrase to be, that his servants laid in a stock of wine every ten days. Though the Asiatics drank sparingly of wine, yet it is not very likely that, in a case such as that above, wine was tasted only thrice in each month.

Bishop Pococke mentions the manner in which the bey of Tunis lived. He had daily twelve sheep, with fish, fowls, soups, oranges, eggs, onions, boiled rice, etc., etc., His nobles dined with him; after they had done, the servants sat down; and, when they had finished, the poor took what was left. Here is no mention of a fat ox; but there were six sheep at the bey's table more than were at the table of Nehemiah: so the twelve sheep were

equal to six sheep and one ox. Probably the mode of living between these two was nearly alike.

**Verse 19. *Think upon me, my God, for good*** Nehemiah wishes for no reward from man; and he only asks mercy at the hand of his God for what his providence enabled him to do; and which, according to the good hand of his God upon him, he had done faithfully. He does not offer his good deeds to God in extenuation of his sins, or as a compensation for the heaven he expected. Nothing of the kind: he simply says, what any good man might say, My God, as I have done good to them, so do good to me; or as the poet has sung:—

*“Teach me to feel another’s wo,  
To hide the fault I see:  
The mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me!”*  
POPE.

This is according to the precept of Christ: “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you.”

## CHAPTER 6

*Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, insidiously desire a conference with Nehemiah, which he refuses, 1-4. They then charge him with the design of rebelling, and causing himself to be made king, 5-7; which he denies, and prays to God for support, 8, 9. A false prophet is hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, to put him in fear; he discovers the imposture, and defeats their design, 10-13. He prays to God against them, 14. The wall is finished in fifty-two days, 15. He discovers a secret and treasonable correspondence between Tobiah and some of the Jewish nobles, 16-19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 2.** *Come, let us meet together in -the plain of Ono.* They wished to get him out of Jerusalem from among his friends, that they might either carry him off, or murder him. Ono is supposed to have been in the tribe of Benjamin, near Jordan.

**Verse 3.** *I am doing a great work* Though he knew their design, he does not think it prudent to mention it. Had he done so, they would probably have gone to extremities, finding that they were discovered; and perhaps in a formidable body attacked Jerusalem, when ill provided to sustain such a shock. They wished to effect their purpose rather by treachery than by open violence. I know not any language which a man who is employed on important labors can use more suitably, as an answer to the thousand invitations and provocations he may have to remit his work, enter into useless or trivial conferences, or notice weak, wicked, and malicious attacks on his work and his motives: "I am doing a great work, so I cannot stoop to your nonsense, or notice your malevolence. Why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to such as you?"

**Verse 5.** *With an open letter in his hand* This was an insult to a person of Nehemiah's quality: as letters sent to chiefs and governors in the East are always carefully folded up, and put in costly silken bags, and these

carefully sealed. The circumstance is thus marked to show the contempt he (Sanballat) had for him.

**Verse 6. *And Gashmu saith it*** You are accused of crimes against the state, and Geshem, the Arabian, is your accuser.

**Verse 7. *Thou hast also appointed prophets*** Persons who pretend to be commissioned to preach to the people, and say, Nehemiah reigneth!

***Come now therefore, and let us take counsel*** Come and justify yourself before me. This was a trick to get Nehemiah into his power.

**Verse 8. *There are no such things done*** You well know that what you say is false: I shall not, therefore, trouble myself about a false charge.

**Verse 10. *Who was shut up*** Lived in a sequestered, solitary state; pretending to sanctity, and to close intercourse with God.

***Let us meet together in the house of God*** The meaning is, "Shut yourself up in the temple; appear to have taken sanctuary there, for in it alone can you find safety." This he said to discourage and disgrace him, and to ruin the people; for, had Nehemiah taken his advice, the people would have been without a leader, their enemies would have come upon them at once, and they would have been an easy prey. Besides, had Nehemiah done this, he would have been shut up in the temple, his government would have been declared at an end, and Sanballat would have assumed the reins.

**Verse 11. *Should such a man as I flee?*** Shall I, who am governor of the people, appointed both by God and the king, shall I betray my trust, and leave the flock without a shepherd? Shall I be a traitor, and abandon the office to which I am appointed? -No! Who, in my situation, with such responsibility, and such prospects, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not: I will stand at my post, and be ready to receive my enemies whensoever they come; so let Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem look to themselves.

**Verse 14. *And on the prophetess Noadiah*** Whether this was a prophet or prophetess, we cannot tell; the Hebrew text only makes her a prophetess; all the versions have Noadiah the prophet, except the Arabic which has "A



Younadaa the prophet. I think the ה he at the end of נבִיאֵה nebiah is a mistake, and that we should read Noadiah the prophet.

**Verse 15. *The twenty and fifth-of-Elul*** This Jewish month answers to a part of our August and September.

***Fifty and two days.*** I see no difficulty in supposing that several thousand workmen, each of whom was working as for God, should be able to complete this wall in fifty-two days. There is little doubt that several parts of the old wall were entire; in many places the foundations still remained; there were all the materials of the old wall still at hand; and though they had to clear and carry away much rubbish, yet they do not appear to have had any stones to quarry. The work mentioned here was little when compared to what Caesar did in Gaul and other places; and to what Titus did at Jerusalem, who built a wall round Jerusalem of five thousand paces in three days, besides, thirteen towers of ten stadia in circuit. And Quintus Curtius and Arrian inform us that Alexander the Great built the walls of Alexandria, on the Tanais, which were nearly eight miles in compass, in the space of between twenty and thirty days. Nehemiah therefore had time sufficient in fifty-two days to repair and restore the walls of Jerusalem. See Calmet on this place.

**Verse 16. *This work was wrought of our God.*** This is an additional reason why we should not wonder at the shortness of the time in which so great a work was done, for God helped them by an especial providence; and this was so very observable, that their carnal enemies could discover it.

**Verse 17. *The nobles of Judah sent many letters*** The circumstances marked in this and the following verses show still more clearly the difficulties which Nehemiah had to encounter; he had enemies without and false friends within. A treacherous correspondence was carried on between the nobles of Judah and the Ammonites; and had almost any other man been at the head of the Jewish affairs, Jerusalem had never been re-established.

**Verse 18. *He was the son-in-law of Shechaniah*** Previously to the coming of Nehemiah, the Jews seemed to be fast intermixing with the heathen, by intermarriages with Ashdodites, Ammonites, and Moabites; see chap. 13:23. Ezra had many evils of this kind to redress, (Ezra 9:3,

etc.,) chiefly among the common people, though there were both chiefs and priests in that trespass. But here we find the heathen and Jewish nobles interlinked; and the latter were so far imbued with the spirit of idolatry, that they forgot God, his service, their brethren, and their own souls.

## CHAPTER 7

*Nehemiah makes use of proper precautions in guarding the city gates, 1-4. He proposes to reckon the people according to their genealogies; and finds a register of those who came out of Babylon, with Zerubbabel, 5-7. A transcript of the register, 8-10. Account of those who came from other provinces; and of priests who, because they could not show their register, were put away from the priesthood as polluted, 61-65. The sum total of the congregation: of their men-servants and maid-servants; singing men and women; horses, mules, camels, and asses, 66-69. The sums given by different persons for the work, 70-72. All betake themselves to their several cities, 73.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 2. *My brother Hanani*** This was the person who gave Nehemiah the account of the desolate state of the Jews, chap. 1:2. He is now made ruler of Jerusalem, probably because Nehemiah was about to return to the Persian court. And he found this man to be one in whom he could trust: 1. Because he was a faithful man—one who had a proper belief in God, his government, and his protection; and being devoted to the interests of his people, would be faithful in the discharge of his office. 2. Because he feared God above many—was the most religious person in the congregation; would govern according to the laws; would take care of the interests of pure religion; would not oppress, take bribes, nor abuse his authority; but act in all things as one who had the fear of God continually before his eyes. These are the proper qualifications of a governor.

**Verse 3. *Until the sun be hot*** The meaning of this is, the gates were not to be opened before sunrise, and always shut at sunset. This is the custom to the present day in many of the cities of the East if a traveler arrives after sunset, he finds the gates shut; and on no consideration will they open them till the next morning, so that those who come late are obliged to lodge in the plain, or under the walls.

**Every one-over against his house.** Each was obliged to guard that part of the wall that was opposite to his own dwelling.

**Verse 4. *The houses were not builded.*** The city was not yet rebuilt, only a row of houses in the inside of the wall all round.

**Verse 5. *God put into mine heart*** With this good man every good thing was of GOD. If he purposed any good, it was because God put it into his heart; if he did any good, it was because the good hand of his God was upon him; if he expected any good, it was because he earnestly prayed God to remember him for good. Thus, in all his ways he acknowledged God, and God directed all his steps.

**Verse 7. *Who came with Zerubbabel*** The register which he found was that of the persons only who came long before Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Joshua the son of Josedek, which register could not answer in every respect to the state of the people then. Several persons and families were no doubt dead, and others had arrived since. Nehemiah probably altered it only in such parts, leaving the body of it as it was before; and this will account for the difference between it and the register that is found in Ezra, chap. ii.

**Verse 8. *The children of Parosh*** As this chapter is almost entirely the same with the second chapter of the book of Ezra, it is not necessary to add any thing to what is said there; and to that chapter, and the accompanying notes, the reader is requested to refer.

**Verse 19. *The children of Bigval, two thousand threescore and seven*** Some MSS. read two thousand and sixty-six, as in Ezra 2:14.

**Verse 33. *The men of the other Nebo*** The word other is not in the parallel place, Ezra 2:29, and is wanting in many of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS. This Nebo is supposed to be the same as Nob or Nobah, in the tribe of Benjamin.

**Verse 34. *The other Elam*** To distinguish him from the Elam mentioned ver. 12.

**Verse 54. *The children of Mehida*** Many of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., have Mehira.

**Verse 68. *Their horses, etc.*** The whole of this verse is wanting in fifty of Kennicott's MSS., and in twenty-nine of those of Deuteronomy Rossi, in the edition of Rab. Chayim, 1525, in the Roman Edit. of the Septuagint; also in the Syriac and in the Arabic. It should however be observed, that the Arabic omits the whole list, having nothing of the chapter but the first five verses. The whole is found in the parallel place, Ezra 2:66. Calmet's note on this passage is incorrect.

**Verse 69. *Their camels, four hundred thirty and five*** After this verse St. Jerome has inserted the following words in the Vulgate:—

*Hucusque refertur quid in commentario scriptum fuerit; exin Nehemiae historia textitur.*

*“Thus far do the words extend which were written in the register; what follows belongs to the history of Nehemiah.”*

But this addition is not found either in the Hebrew or any of the ancient versions. It is wanting also in the Complutum and Paris Polyglots, but is in the Editio Prima of the Vulgate.

**Verse 70. *The Tirshatha gave*** The Septuagint, particularly the copy in the Codex Alexandrinus, intimates that this sum was given to the Tirshatha, or Nehemiah: *καὶ τῷ ἀθηρσαθα ἔδωκαν εἰς θησαυρον*, And to the Athersatha they gave for the treasure, etc.

For the meaning of the word Tirshatha, see on Ezra 2:63.

**Verse 71. *Two thousand and two hundred pounds*** The Septuagint has two thousand THREE hundred minae of silver.

**Verse 73. *All Israel, dwelt in their cities*** It was in reference to this particularly that the public registers were examined; for by them they found the different families, and consequently the cities, villages, etc., which belonged to them, according to the ancient division of the lands. It seems that the examination of the registers occupied about a month; for as soon as the walls were finished, which was in the sixth month, (Elul,) chap. 6:15, Nehemiah instituted the examination mentioned in this chapter, 7:5; and by the concluding verse we find that the different families had got into their paternal cities in the seventh month, Tisri, answering to a part of our September and October. Thus the register determined every thing:

there was no room for complaint, and none to accuse the governor of partiality.

## CHAPTER 8

*Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Levites, read and interpret the laws to the people, 1-7. The manner in which they do this important work, 8. The effect produced on the people's minds by hearing it, 9. The people are exhorted to be glad, and are told that the joy of the Lord is their strength, 10-12. On the second day they assemble, and find that they should keep the feast of tabernacles; which they accordingly religiously solemnize for seven days; and Ezra reads to them from the book of the law, 13-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1.** *The street that was before the water gate* The gate which led from the temple to the brook Kidron.

**Verse 2.** *All that could hear with understanding* Infants, idiots, and children not likely to receive instruction, were not permitted to attend this meeting; nor should any such, in any place, be ever brought to the house of God, if it can be avoided: yet, rather than a poor mother should be deprived of the ordinances of God, let her come with her child in her arms; and although it be inconvenient to the congregation, and to some ministers, to hear a child cry, it is cruel to exclude the mother on this account, who, having no person to take care of her child while absent, must bring it with her, or be totally deprived of the ordinances of the Christian Church.

*Upon the first day of the seventh month.* This was the first day of what was called the civil year; and on it was the feast of trumpets, the year being ushered in by the sound of these instruments.

**Verse 4.** *Stood upon a pulpit of wood* מגדל migdal, a tower, a platform, raised up for the purpose, to elevate him sufficiently for the people both to see and hear him; for it is said, ver. 5, that he was above all the people. This is the first intimation we have of a pulpit, or structure of this kind. But we must not suppose that it was any thing similar to those tubs or barrels ridiculously set up in churches and chapels, in which a preacher is

nearly as much confined, during the time of his preaching, as if he was in the stocks.

**Verse 5. *All the people stood up*** This was out of respect to the sacred word: in imitation of this, when the gospel for the day is read in our churches, all the people stand up.

**Verse 6. *Ezra blessed the Lord*** In imitation of this, we say, when the gospel for the day is commenced, Glory be to God for his holy Gospel! and conclude this thanksgiving with, Amen.

**Verse 8. *So they read in the book*** For an explanation of this verse, see the observations at the end of the chapter. See “Nehemiah 8:17”

**Verse 9. *Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha*** This puts it out of doubt that, when the Tirshatha is mentioned, Nehemiah himself is intended, Tirshatha being the name of his office.

***Mourn not, nor weep.*** This is a holy day to God: a day appointed for general rejoicing in Him who has turned our captivity, restored to us his law, and again established among us his ordinances.

**Verse 10. *Eat the fat, and drink the sweet*** Eat and drink the best that you have; and while ye are feeding yourselves in the fear of the Lord, remember those who cannot feast; and send portions to them, that the joy and the thanksgiving may be general. Let the poor have reason to rejoice as well as you.

***For the joy of the Lord is your strength.*** This is no gluttonous and drunken festival that enervates the body, and enfeebles the mind: from your religious feast your bodies will acquire strength and your minds power and fervor, so that you shall be able to Do His will, and to do it cheerfully. Religious joy, properly tempered with continual dependence on the help of God, meekness of mind, and self-diffidence, is a powerful means of strengthening the soul. In such a state every duty is practicable, and every duty delightful. In such a frame of mind no man an ever fell, and in such a state of mind the general health of the body is much improved; a cheerful heart is not only a continual feast, but also a continual medicine.

**Verse 14. *In the feast of the seventh month*** That is, the feast of tabernacles, which was held in commemoration of the sojourning of their



fathers in the wilderness after they had been delivered from the Egyptian bondage. Now, having been delivered from the Babylonish captivity, and the proper time of the year occurring, it was their especial duty to keep the same feast.

**Verse 15. *Fetch olive branches*** For every thing concerning this feast of tabernacles, see the notes on Lev. xxiii., and the other places there referred to.

**Verse 16. *Upon the roof of his house*** It need scarcely be repeated, that the houses in the East are generally built with flat roofs. On these they reposed; on these they took the air in the heats of summer; and on these they oftentimes slept.

**Verse 17. *Since the days of Joshua*** No feast of tabernacles since Joshua's time had been so heartily and so piously celebrated. The story of the sacred fire now discovered, which had been hidden by the order of Jeremiah in a dry well, and now, some of the mud from the bottom being brought upon the altar, was kindled afresh by the rays of the sun, which suddenly broke out, though before covered with clouds, etc., is worthy of no credit. Those who wish to see the detail may consult 2Mac 1:18-36.

ON the subject in verse 8, I beg leave to make a few observations:-So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. The Israelites, having been lately brought out of the Babylonish captivity, in which they had continued seventy years, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, Jeremiah 25:11, were not only extremely corrupt, but it appears that they had in general lost the knowledge of the ancient Hebrew to such a degree, that when the book of the law was read, they did not understand it: but certain Levites stood by, and gave the sense, i. e., translated into the Chaldee dialect. This was not only the origin of the Chaldee Targums, or translation of the law and prophets into that tongue but was also, in all probability, the origin of preaching from a text; for it appears that the people were not only ignorant of their ancient language, but also of the rites and ceremonies of their religion, having been so long in Babylon, where they were not permitted to observe them. This being the case, not only the language must be interpreted, but the meaning of the rites and ceremonies must also be explained; for we find from ver. 13, etc., of this chapter, that they had even

forgotten the feast of tabernacles, and every thing relative to that ceremony.

As we nowhere find that what is called preaching on or expounding a text was ever in use before that period, we are probably beholden to the Babylonish captivity for producing, in the hand of Divine Providence, a custom the most excellent and beneficial ever introduced among men.

What the nature of preaching or expounding the word of God was, at this early period of its institution, we learn from the above cited text.

I. They read in the book of the law of God. — The words of God, the doctrines of Divine revelation, are the proper matter of preaching; for they contain the wisdom of the Most High, and teach man the things which belong to his peace and happiness.

II. They read distinctly-**מפרש** mephorash, from **פרש** parash, to expand; they analyzed, dilated, and expounded it at large, showing the import and genuine meaning of every word.

III. They gave the sense-**ושום שכל** vesom sechel, they put weight to it; showed its value and utility, and how intimately concerned they were in all that was revealed: thus applying verbal criticism, and general exposition to their true and most important purposes.

IV. They caused them to understand the reading-**ויבינו במקרא** vayyabinu bammikra: and they understood-had a mental taste and perception of the things which were in the reading, i. e., in the letter and spirit of the text. Thus they knew the Divine will, and approved the things that were more excellent, being (thus) instructed out of the law, Romans 2:18.

This was the ancient method of expounding the word of God among the Jews; and this mode is still more necessary for US:—

1. Because the sacred writings, as they came from God, are shut up in languages no longer vernacular; and no translation ever did or ever can reach the force of the original words, though perhaps our own in general, comes nearest to this of all versions, whether ancient or modern.

2. Ninety-nine out of a hundred know nothing of these languages; and consequently cannot, of themselves, reap all the requisite benefit from reading the Scriptures.
3. Sacred things are illustrated in the Bible by a reference to arts and sciences, of which the mass of the people are as ignorant as they are of the original tongues.
4. Provincial customs and fashions are mentioned in these writings, which must be understood, or the force and meaning of many texts cannot be comprehended.
5. There is a depth in the word of God which cannot be fathomed except either by Divine inspiration, or by deep study and research, for which the majority of the people have no time.
6. The people in general trust to the piety, learning and abilities of their ministers, and maintain them as persons capable of instructing them in all the deep things of God; and believing them to be holy men, they are confident they will not take their tithes, their food, and their raiment, under a pretense of doing a work for which they have not the ordinary qualifications. Where there is not such preaching as this, the people “sit in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death;” sinners are not converted unto God; neither are believers “built up on their most holy faith.”

Reader-Art thou a Christian minister? Dost thou feed the flock of God? Let thy conduct, thy conscience, and the fruits of thy ministry answer for thee.

## CHAPTER 9

*On the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month, the people hold a solemn fast unto the Lord, and confess their sins, 1-3. The Levites give a general account of God's kindness and forbearance to them and to their fathers; and acknowledge God's mercies and judgments, 4-37. They make a covenant with the Lord, 38.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. *Now in the twenty and fourth day*** The feast of trumpets was on the first day of this month; on the fourteenth began the feast of tabernacles, which, lasting seven days, finished on the twenty-second; on the twenty-third they separated themselves from their illegitimate wives and children; and, on the twenty-fourth, they held a solemn day of fasting and confession of sin, and reading the law, which they closed by renewing their covenants.

**Verse 2. *The seed of Israel separated themselves*** A reformation of this kind was begun by Ezra, Ezra 10:3; but it appears that either more were found out who had taken strange wives, or else those who had separated from them had taken them again.

***And stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.*** They acknowledged that they had been sinners against God throughout all their generations; that their fathers had sinned and were punished; and that they, with this example before their eyes, had copied their fathers' offenses.

**Verse 3. *One fourth part of the day*** As they did no manner of work on this day of fasting and humiliation, so they spent the whole of it in religious duties. They began, says Calmet, on the first hour, and continued these exercises to the third hour; from the third they recommenced, and continued till the sixth hour; from the sixth to the ninth; and from the ninth, to the twelfth or last hour. 1. They heard the law read, standing; 2.

They prostrated themselves, and confessed their sins; 3. They arose to praise God for having spared and dealt thus mercifully with them.

**Verse 5. *Stand up and bless the Lord your God*** It is the shameless custom of many congregations of people to sit still while they profess to bless and praise God, by singing the Psalms of David or hymns made on the plan of the Gospel! I ask such persons, Did they ever feel the spirit of devotion while thus employed? If they do, it must be owned that, by the prevalence of habit, they have counteracted the influence of an attitude most friendly to such acts of devotion.

**Verse 6. *Thou preservest them all*** ואתה מחיה אה כלם vettah mechaiyeh eth cullam, and thou givest life to them all: and the host of the heavens, לך משתחווים lecha mishtachavim, prostrate themselves unto thee. How near is this to the opinion of Kepler, that all the heavenly host are instinct with life, and navigate the great expanse on pinions adjusted to their situation in their respective orbits! But to preserve in life, or in being, is a very good meaning in the original, which does not necessarily imply vitality. We say a tree is alive when flourishing, a plant is dead when it withers, etc.

**Verse 7. *Who didst choose Abram*** See the notes on the passages referred to in the margin.

***The name of Abraham*** For the explanation of this name, See the notes on “Genesis 17:5”.

**Verse 12. *By a cloudy pillar*** See the notes on the parallel passages, both here and in the other verses.

**Verse 14. *Madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath*** They appear to have forgotten this first of all the commandments of God, during their sojourning in Egypt.

**Verse 17. *And in their rebellion appointed a captain*** This clause, read according to its order in the Hebrew text, is thus: And appointed a captain to return to their bondage in their rebellion. But it is probable that במרים bemiryam, in their rebellion, is a mistake for במצרים bemitsrayim, in Egypt. This is the reading of seven of Kennicott’s and Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS., the Neapolitan edition of the Hagiographa, and the

Septuagint. It is also the reading in Numbers 14:4. The clause should undoubtedly be read, They appointed a captain to return to their bondage in EGYPT.

**Verse 19. *The pillar of the cloud departed not from them*** מעליהם

mealeyhem, “from over them.” I have already had occasion to observe that this miraculous cloud, the symbol of the Divine presence, assumed three different positions while accompanying the Israelitish camp: 1. As a cloud in the form of a pillar, it went before them when they journey, to point out their way in the wilderness. 2. As a pillar of fire, it continued with them during the night, to give them light, and be a rallying point for the whole camp in the night season. 3. As an extended cloud, it hovered over them in their encampments, to refresh them with its dews, and to keep them from the ardours of the sun.

**Verse 21. *Their clothes waxed not old*** See the note on “Deuteronomy 8:4”.

**Verse 22. *The land of Og king of Bashan.*** It is most evident that Sihon was king of Heshbon. How then can it be said that they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon? The words the land of the king of Heshbon are wanting in two of Deuteronomy Rossi’s MSS. In another MS. the words and the land of are wanting; so that the clause is read, They possessed the land of Sihon, king of Heshbon. The Septuagint has the same reading; the Arabic nearly the same, viz., the land of Sihon, the land of the king of Heshbon. The Syriac has, They possessed the land of Sihon, the land of the **KINGS** of Heshbon. The reading of the text is undoubtedly wrong; that supported by the MSS. and by the Septuagint is most likely to be the true one. Those of the Arabic and Syriac contain at least no contradictory sense. The and in the Hebrew and our version, distinguishes two lands and two kings; the land of Sihon and the land of the king of Heshbon: when it is most certain that only one land and one king can be meant: but the **ו** vau may be translated here as it often is, even: **EVEN** the land of the king of Heshbon.

**Verse 25. *Became fat, and delighted themselves*** They became effeminate, fell under the power of luxury, got totally corrupted in their manners, sinned against all the mercies of God, and then were destroyed by his

judgments. We have an old nervous saying, “War begets poverty, poverty begets peace, peace begets affluence, affluence begets luxury and corruption of manners; and hence civil broils, foreign wars, and desolations.” A sensible Roman historian has said the same: “Imperium facile iis artibus retinetur, quibus initio partum est: verum ubi pro LABORE, DESIDIA; pro continentia et aequitate, LIBIDO atque SUPERBIA invasere: fortuna simul cum moribus IMMUTATUR.”

**Verse 27. *Thou gavest them saviors*** The whole book of Judges is a history of God’s mercies, and their rebellions.

**Verse 30. *Many years didst thou forbear*** It is supposed that Nehemiah refers here principally to the ten tribes. And many years did God bear with them; not less than two hundred and fifty-four years from their separation from the house of David, till their captivity and utter dispersion under Shalmaneser; during the whole of which time God invariably warned them by his prophets; or, as it is here said, by thy Spirit in thy prophets, which gives us the true notion of Divine inspiration. God’s Spirit was given to the prophets; and they testified to the people, according as they were taught and influenced by this Spirit.

**Verse 32. *On our kings, on our princes*** I believe Nehemiah in this place mentions the whole of civil society in its officers as they stand related to each other in dignity:-1. **KINGS**, as supreme. 2. **PRINCES**. 3. **PRIESTS**. 4. **PROPHETS**. 5. The **FATHERS**, heads or chiefs of tribes and families. 6. The **COMMON PEOPLE**. Those who disturb this natural order (for it subsists even in Britain) are enemies to the peace of the whole, whatever they may pretend to the contrary.

**Verse 34. *Neither have our kings*** In this verse he acknowledges that the kings, princes, priests, and fathers, had broken the law: but the prophets are left out; for they continued faithful to God, testifying by his Spirit against the crimes of all; and this even at the risk of their lives.

**Verse 35. *For they have not served thee in their kingdom*** Instead of **במלכותם** bemalecutham, “in THEIR kingdom,” **במלכותך** bemalecuthecha, in THY kingdom,” is the reading of two of Kennicott’s MSS.; as also of the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic. This is most likely to be the true reading.

**Verse 36. *Behold, we are servants*** They had no king of their own: and were under the government of the kings of Persia, to whom they paid a regular tribute.

**Verse 37. *It yieldeth much increase unto the kings*** Good and fruitful as the land is, yet it profits us little; as the chief profits on all things go to the kings of Persia.

***Over our bodies*** Exacting personal and feudal services from us, and from our cattle; and this not by any fixed rate, or rule, of so much rent, so much labor, or boons; but at their pleasure; so that we can neither call our persons, our time, our land, nor our cattle, our own: therefore we are in great distress. Miserable are the people that live under such a government. Think of this, ye Britons! think of your liberties and rights. Compare them with any other nation under heaven, and see what a balance is in your favor. Almost all the nations of the earth acknowledge Britons the most happy of all men. May I not say,

*O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint!*

*“How exceedingly happy would you be, could you but consider your many advantages!”*

**Verse 38. *Our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.*** Persuaded that we have brought all the miseries upon ourselves by our transgressions, feeling much and fearing more, we make a covenant with thee to devote ourselves to thy service; to do with us as thou pleasest. From this sealing we learn that at this time the government of the Jews was a mixed aristocracy; composed of the nobles for the civil department, and the priests and Levites for the ecclesiastical.

This was not mixing the Church with the state, or the state with the Church: both were separate, yet both mutually supported each other. The state never attempted to model the Church according to its own mind; because the Church had been founded and regulated by God, and neither its creed nor its ordinances could be changed. The Church did not meddle with the state, to give it new laws, new ordinances, or new officers. Therefore the one could not be jealous of the other. Where this state of things prevails, every public blessing may be expected. In every state God says



to the governors and the governed: “Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and to GOD the things which are GOD’S.”

## CHAPTER 10

*The names of those who sealed the covenant, 1-27. All solemnly promise not to have affinity with the people of the land, 28-30; to observe the Sabbaths, 31; to provide for the sanctuary according to the law, 32-36; and to pay the regular tithes for the support of the priests, Levites, and other officers of the temple, 37-39.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1. *Now those that sealed*** Four classes here seal. Nehemiah first, as their governor. And after him, secondly, The priests, ver. 2-8. Thirdly, The Levites, ver. 9-13. Fourthly, The chiefs of the people, ver. 14-27.

It is strange that, among all these, we hear nothing of Ezra, nor of the high priest Eliashib. Nor are any of the prophets mentioned, though there must have been some of them at Jerusalem at this time.

The whole of this chapter, the two first verses excepted, is wanting in the Arabic; the word Pashur of the third verse is retained; and the rest of the chapter is summed up in these words, and the rest of their assembly.

**Verse 28. *And the rest of the people*** All had, in one or other of the classes which sealed, their representatives; and by their sealing they considered themselves bound.

**Verse 29. *They clave to their brethren*** Though they did not sign this instrument, yet they bound themselves under a solemn oath that they would fulfill the conditions of the covenant, and walk according to the law of Moses.

**Verse 30. *Not give our daughters*** Make no affinity with the people of the land.

**Verse 31. *Bring ware*** We will most solemnly keep the Sabbath. Leave the seventh year-We will let the land have its Sabbath, and rest every seventh year. See on Exodus 23:10, 11.

**Verse 32. Charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel**

According to the law, every one above twenty years of age was to give half a shekel to the sanctuary, which was called a ransom for their souls. See Exodus 30:11-16. But why is one third of a shekel now promised instead of the half shekel, which the law required? To this question no better answer can be given than this: the general poverty of the people, occasioned by their wars, overthrows, heavy tributes, etc., in the land of their captivity: and now on their return, having little property, it was impossible for them to give more; and we know, from the terms of the law in this case, that the poor and the rich were obliged to give alike, because it was a ransom for their souls; and the souls of the poor and the rich were of like value, and stood equally in need of redemption; for all were equally fallen, and all had come equally short of the glory of God.

Though only a third part of a shekel was given at this time, and probably for the reason above assigned, yet when the people got into a state of greater prosperity, the half shekel was resumed: for it is clear that this sum was paid in the time of our Lord, though not to the temple, but to the Roman government. Hence when those who collected this as a tribute came to our Lord, it was for the **διδραχμα**, didrachma, which was half a shekel; and the coin with which our Lord paid for himself and Peter was a stater, which contained exactly two half shekels. See Matthew 17:24-27.

**Verse 34. Cast the lots-for the wood-offering** There does not appear to have been any wood-offering under the law. It was the business of the Nethinim to procure this; and hence they were called hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation. But it is very likely that after the captivity few Nethinim were found; for as such, who were the descendants of the Gibeonites, were considered only as slaves among the Israelites, they would doubtless find it as much, if not more, their interest to abide in the land of their captivity, than to return with their former masters. As there was not enough of such persons to provide wood for the fires of the temple, the people now cast lots, not who should furnish the wood, but what class or district should furnish it at a particular time of the year, so that there might be a constant supply. One district furnished it for one whole year, or for the first month or year; another, for the second month or year; and so on. Now the lot was to determine which district should bring the supply on the first month or year; which on the second; and so

on. When the wood was brought, it was delivered to the Levites: they cut, prepared, and stacked it; and when wanted, delivered it to the priests, whose business it was to lay it upon the altar. Perhaps this providing of the wood was done only once a year by one district, the next year by another district, and so on: and this bringing the wood to the temple at last became a great day; and was constituted into a feast, called by Josephus *ξυλοφορια*, the carrying of the wood. — See Deuteronomy Bell. Jud. lib. ii., cap. xvii., sec. 6, p. 194. This feast is not mentioned in the sacred writings: then there was no need for such an institution, as the Nethinim were sufficiently numerous.

**Verse 36. *Also the first-born*** See this law, and the reasons of it, Exodus 13:1-13. As by this law the Lord had a right to all the firstborn, instead of these he was pleased to take the tribe of Levi for the whole; and thus the Levites served at the tabernacle and temple, instead of the first-born of all the tribes.

**Verse 38. *Tithe of the tithes*** The tithes of all the produce of the fields were brought to the Levites; out of these a tenth part was given to the priests. This is what is called the tithe of the tithes. The law for this is found, Numbers 18:26.

**Verse 39. *We will not forsake the house of our God.*** Here was a glorious resolution; and had they been faithful to it, they had been a great and good people to the present day. But what is implied in, We will not forsake the house of our God? I answer:—

I. The Church of God is the house of God; there he has his constant dwelling-place.

II. True believers are his family in this house; and this family consists of,  
1. Fathers and mothers; 2. Young persons; 3. Little children; And 4. Servants.

III. The ministers of the word of God are the officers and overseers of this house and family.

IV. The worship of God is the grand employment of this family.

V. The ordinances of God are the food of the members of this family; or the means of their spiritual support.

VI. Those who do not forsake the house of their God are those, 1. Who continue in the faith; 2. Who grow in grace; 3. Who labor in the vineyard; 4. Who bring forth fruit; 5. Who conscientiously attend all the ordinances; and 6. Who take care that the offerings of the house of God shall be duly made, providing for those who labor in the word and doctrine.

READER, 1. Art thou of this house? 2. Art thou in this house? 3. To what part of the family dost thou belong? 4. Art thou still an infant in this house? 5. Dost thou attend the ordinances of this house? 6. Hast thou forsaken this house? These questions are of great importance; answer them as in the sight of God.

## CHAPTER 11

*Lots are cast that a tenth of the people may constantly dwell at Jerusalem, and the other nine parts in the other cities and villages, 1. Some willingly offer themselves to dwell in Jerusalem, and the people bless them, 2. An enumeration of the families that dwell in Jerusalem, of Judah, and Benjamin, 3-9; of those of the priests, 10-12; of the chiefs of the fathers, 13; of the mighty men, 14; of the Levites, 15-18; of the porters, 19; of the residue of Israel and the officers, 20-24. The villages at which they dwelt, 25-35. Certain divisions of the Levites were in Judah and Benjamin, 36.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. *To bring one of ten*** Jerusalem certainly had many inhabitants at this time; but not sufficient to preserve the city, which was now encompassed with a wall, and the rebuilding of which was going on fast. Nehemiah therefore obliged one tenth of the country people to come and dwell in it, that the population might be sufficient for the preservation and defense of the city. Ten were set apart, and the lot cast among them to see which one of the ten should take up his residence in the city.

**Verse 2. *All the men that willingly offered*** Some volunteered their services, which was considered a sacrifice to patriotism at that time, as Jerusalem afforded very few advantages, and was a place of considerable danger; hence the people spoke well of them, and no doubt prayed for God's blessing upon them.

**Verse 3. *Now these are the chief*** A good deal of difference will be found between the enumeration here and that in 1 Chronicles 9:2, etc. There, those only who came with Zerubbabel appear to be numbered; here, those, and the persons who came with Ezra and Nehemiah, enter into the account.

**Verse 9. *And Joel-was their overseer*** Joel was chief or magistrate over those, and Judah was his second or deputy. Perhaps each had a different office, but that of Joel was the chief.

**Verse 11. *Ruler of the house of God.*** He had the command over all secular matters, as the high priest had over those which were spiritual.

**Verse 14. *Mighty men of valor*** Noted for strength of body, and military courage.

**Verse 16. *And Shabbethai*** This verse, with verses 20, 21, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, and 35, are all wanting in the Septuagint and the whole chapter is wanting in the Arabic, the translator not being concerned in Jewish genealogies.

***The outward business*** Calmet supposes that he provided the victuals for the priests, victims for the sacrifices, the sacerdotal vestments, the sacred vessels, and other necessaries for the service of the temple.

**Verse 17. *The principal to begin the thanksgiving*** The precentor, pitcher of the tune, or master-singer.

**Verse 22. *The overseer also of the Levites*** פקיד pekid, the visitant, the inspector; translated [ἐπισκοπος](#), bishop, both by the Septuagint and Vulgate.

**Verse 23. *It was the king's commandment*** By the king some understand David, and others Artaxerxes. It is most probable that it was the latter; who wished that a provision should be made for these, a part of whose office was to offer up prayers also, as well as praises. For we know that Darius made an ample provision for the priests, that they might offer sacrifices of sweet savor unto the God of heaven; and pray for the life of the king and of his sons, Ezra 6:10. Some have thought that they had been Jewish singers employed in the service of the Persian king, to whom he had given a salary, and to whom he wished still to continue the same.

**Verse 24. *Pethahiah-was at the king's hand*** He was the governor appointed by the Persian king over the Jewish nation in those matters in which the civil government interfered with Jewish concerns. He no doubt fixed, levied, and received the tribute.

**Verse 26. *And at Jeshua*** This city is nowhere else mentioned.

**Verse 28. *Mekonah*** This city is also unknown.

**Verse 31. *Geba*** Probably the same as Gibeah of Saul.

**Verse 32. *Ananiah*** No city of this name is known.

**Verse 33. *Hadid*** This place is also unknown.

***Neballat*** Also unknown.

**Verse 35. *Lod, and Ono*** These towns were built by the sons of Elpaal, 1 Chronicles 8:12.

***The valley of craftsmen.*** See 1 Chronicles 4:14. Probably this latter town was built in this valley.

**Verse 36. *And of the Levites were divisions*** The Levites had their dwellings in the divisions of Judah and Benjamin. This is probably the meaning: the Syriac says, They had the half of Judah and Benjamin; which is not likely.

THAT the people whose hearts were now turned towards the Lord, would make the best provision for the support of God's work, and all those engaged in it, we may naturally suppose; but this could not be very great, as the complete service was not yet established, and the Levites themselves were few in number.



## CHAPTER 12

*Account of the priests and Levites that come up with Zerubbabel, 1-7. Of the Levites, 8-21. The Levites in the days of Eliashib, 22-26. Of the dedication of the wall, and its ceremonies, 27-43. Different officers appointed, 44-47.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1. *Now these are the priests*** Not the whole, but the chief of them, as we are informed, ver. 7, 22, 23, and 24. The Septuagint omit ver. 3, except the word Shechaniah; as also verses 4, 5, 6, 9, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41. The Arabic omits the first twenty-six verses, and ver. 29. Mention is made of Ezra in this verse; and he is generally allowed to be that Ezra whose book the reader has already passed over, and who came to Jerusalem in the time of Cyrus, with Zerubbabel. If this were the same, he must have been at this time upward of a hundred years of age: and this case is not improbable, as an especial providence might preserve such a very useful man beyond the ordinary age of men. See what has been said on the case of Nehemiah, See “Nehemiah 1:1”.

**Verse 7. *The chief of the priests*** They were twenty-four orders or courses in number, all subordinate to each other; as established by David, 1 Chronicles 24:18. And these orders or courses were continued till the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. See Calmet.

**Verse 8. *Over the thanksgiving*** The principal singers: See on “Nehemiah 11:17”.

**Verse 22. *Jaddua*** This was probably the high priest who went in his pontifical robes, accompanied by his brethren, to meet Alexander the Great, when he was advancing towards Jerusalem, with the purpose to destroy it, after having conquered Tyre and Gaza. Alexander was so struck with the appearance of the priest, that he forbore all hostilities against Jerusalem, prostrated himself before Jaddua, worshipped the Lord at the

temple, and granted many privileges to the Jews. See Josephus, ANT. lib. xi., c. 3, and Prideaux's Connections, lib. 7, p. 695.

**To the reign of Darius the Persian.** Calmet maintains that this must have been Darius Codomanus, who was defeated by Alexander the Great: but Archbishop Usher understands it of Darius Nothus, in whose reign he thinks Jaddua was born, who was high priest under Darius Codomanus.

**Verse 23. *The book of the chronicles*** This is not the book of Chronicles which we have now, no such list being found in it; but some other book or register, which is lost.

**Verse 25. *The thresholds of the gates.*** Some understand this of a sort of porticoes at the gates, and are puzzled about it, because they find no mention of porticoes elsewhere: but why may we not suppose these to resemble our watch-boxes or some temporary moveable shelters for those who took care of the gates? That there must have been some such conveniences, common sense dictates.

**Verse 27. *At the dedication of the wall*** They sent for the Levites from all quarters, that this dedication might be as solemn and majestic as possible; and it is likely that this was done as soon as convenient after the walls were finished. The dedication seems to have consisted in processions of the most eminent persons around the walls, and thanksgivings to God, who had enabled them to bring the work to so happy a conclusion: and no doubt to all this were added a particular consecration of the city to God, and the most earnest invocation that he would take it under his guardian care, and defend it and its inhabitants against all their enemies.

The ancients consecrated their cities to the gods, and the very walls were considered as sacred. Ovid gives us an account of the ceremonies used in laying the foundations of the walls of the city of Rome, by Romulus. After having consulted together who should give name to the city, and have the direction of the wall by which it was necessary to surround it, they agreed to let the case be decided by the flight of birds. One brother went to the top of the Mons Palatinus, the other to that of Mount Aventine. Romulus saw twelve birds, Remus saw but six; the former, therefore, according to agreement, took the command. The poet thus describes the ceremonies used on the occasion:—

*Apta dies legitur, qua moenia signet aratro;  
 Sacra Palis suberant; inde movetur opus.  
 Fossa fit ad solidum: fruges jaciuntur in ima.  
 Et de vicino terra petita solo  
 Fossa repletur humo, plenaeque imponitur ara;  
 Et novus accenso finditur igne focus.  
 Inde, premens stivam, designat moenia sulco;  
 Alba jugum niveo cum bove vacca tulit.  
 Vox tuit haec regis; Condenti Jupiter urbem,  
 Et genitor Mavors, Vestaque mater ades:  
 Quosque pium est adhibere deos, advertite cuncti:  
 Auspicious vobis hoc mihi surgat opus.  
 Longa sit huic aetas, dominaeque potentia terrae:  
 Sitque sub hac oriens occiduusque dies! Ille precabatur.*

OVID, *Fast. lib. iv., ver. 819.*

“A proper day is chosen in which he may mark out the walls with the plough: the festival of Pales was at hand when the work was begun. A ditch is dug down to the solid clay, into which they cast the fruits of the season; and bring earth from the neighboring ground, with which they fill up the trench; and on it build an altar, by whose flames the newly made hearth is cleft asunder. Then Romulus, seizing the plough, which a white heifer yoked with a snowy bull drew along, marked out the walls with a furrow. And thus spoke the king: ‘O Jupiter, and Father Mars, with Matron Vesta, prosper me in founding this city! And all ye gods, approach, whomsoever it is right to invoke! Under your auspices may the work arise; may it endure for countless ages, and be the mistress of the world; and may the East and the West be under its control!’ Thus he prayed.”

The above is a literal version, and the account is not a little curious.

**Verse 29. *From the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth*** Or, from Beth-Gilgal; a village erected in the place where the Israelites encamped after they had, under the direction of Joshua, passed over Jordan.

**Verse 30. *The priests and the Levites purified themselves*** This consisted in washings, abstinence from wine, and other matters, which, on all other occasions, were lawful. And as to the purifying of the gates and the walls, nothing was requisite but to remove all filth from the former, and all rubbish that might have been laid against the latter.

**Verse 31. *Then I brought up the princes*** Perhaps this verse should be read thus: “Then I caused the princes of Judah to go upon the wall, and appointed two great choirs, [to sing praises,] and two processions, one on the right hand, etc.

The following seems to have been the order of the procession: he divided the priests, the Levites, the magistrates, and the people into two companies; each company to go round one half of the wall. They began at the dung gate, one party going to the right and the other to the left, till they met at the great space opposite to the temple, where they all offered many sacrifices to God, and rejoiced with exceeding great joy; shouting so that the noise was heard a great way off.

**Verse 38. *The broad wall*** What part this was, we know not: it might have been a place designed for a public promenade, or a parade for assembling the troops or guard of the temple.

**Verse 47. *All Israel-gave the portions of the singers*** The singers and the porters were supported by the people at large; and each of these had their portions served out to them daily.

***And they sanctified-unto the Levites*** The things which were provided for sacred uses were delivered by the people to the Levites, and the Levites presented them to the priests.

***The children of Aaron.*** This may refer principally to the tithes which the people brought to the Levites; the tithe or tenth of which the Levites gave to the priests. The presenting these tithes is termed sanctifying them; that is, dedicating them to those sacred or ecclesiastical uses for which they were designed: this is a very general meaning of the word sanctify in Scripture.

## CHAPTER 13

*The law is read, which commands that the Ammonite and Moabite should be separated from the congregation, on which they separate all the mixed multitude, 1-3. Eliashib the high priest having not only joined opinion with Sanballat, but being also allied to Tobiah the Ammonite, and having given him some of the chambers in the court of the house of God, 4, 5; Nehemiah casts out the goods of Tobiah, and purifies the chambers, 6-9. He rectifies several evils; and the people bring the tithes of all things to the treasuries, 10-12. He appoints treasurers, 13, 14; finds that the Sabbaths had been greatly profaned by buying and selling, and rectifies this abuse, 15-22; finds Jews that had married strange wives; against whom he testifies, and expels one of the priests who had married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, 23-29. He cleanses them from all strangers, makes a final regulation, and prays for God's mercy to himself, 30, 31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. *On that day*** I am quite of Calmet's mind that the transaction detailed in this chapter did not immediately succeed the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem. It is most likely that, when this dedication was ended, Nehemiah returned to Babylon, as himself particularly marks, ver. 6, for he did return in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes; and then, after certain days, supposed to be about the term of one year, he got leave to return to Jerusalem to see how matters were conducted: and there he found the evils which he mentions in this chapter, and which he redressed in the manner himself describes. See the introduction to this book.

***Should not come into the congregation*** That is, Ye shall not form any kind of matrimonial alliance with them. This, and this alone, is the meaning of the law.

**Verse 3. *They separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.*** They excluded all strange women, and all persons, young and old, who had been born of these illegal connections.

**Verse 4. *Eliashib the priest*** Perhaps this was a different person from Eliashib the high priest; but there is no indubitable evidence that he was not the same. If he was high priest, he was very unfaithful to the high charge which he had received; and a reproach to the priesthood. He had married his grandson to Sanballat's daughter: this produced a connection with Tobiah, the fast friend of Sanballat; in whose favor he polluted the house of God, giving him one of the chambers for his ordinary residence, which were appointed for the reception of the tithes, oblations, etc., that came to the house of God.

**Verse 6. *Was not I at Jerusalem*** Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and remained there till the thirty-second year, twelve years: then returned to Babylon, and staid one year; got leave to revisit his brethren; and found matters as stated in this chapter.

**Verse 8. *I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah*** He acted as Jesus Christ did when he found the courts of the Lord's house profaned: He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of those who sold doves.

**Verse 10. *The portions of the Levites had not been given*** Hence we find they were obliged to abandon the sacred service, and betake themselves to cultivate the land for their support. This was the fault of the rulers, who permitted all these abuses.

**Verse 11. *Why is the house of God forsaken?*** They had all solemnly promised, chap. 10:39, that they would never forsake the house of their God; but, alas, how soon is this forgotten! Nehemiah used their own words here by way of reproof.

**Verse 13. *They were counted faithful*** They were reported to me as persons in whom I could confide; they had been steady in God's ways and work, while others had been careless and relaxed.

**Verse 14. *Wipe not out my good deeds*** If thou wert strict to mark what is done amiss, even my good deeds must be wiped out; but, Lord, remember me in thy mercy, and let my upright conduct be acceptable to thee!

**Verse 15. *Treading wine-presses*** The Sabbath appears to have been totally disregarded.

**Verse 17. *I contended with the nobles*** These evils took place through their negligence; and this I proved before them.

**Verse 19. *When the gates-began to be dark*** After sunset on Friday evening he caused the gates to be shut, and kept them shut all the Sabbath; and, as he could not trust the ordinary officers, he set some of his own servants to watch the gates, that no person might enter for the purpose of traffic.

**Verse 20. *So the merchants-lodged without Jerusalem*** They exposed their wares for sale on the outside of the walls.

**Verse 21. *I will lay hands on you*** I will imprison every man of you. This had the desired effect; they came no more.

**Verse 22. *Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.*** By some Nehemiah has been thought to deal with God too much on the principle of merit. That he wished God to remember him for good, is sufficiently evident; and who does not wish the same? But that he expected heaven because of his good deeds, does not appear. Indeed, the concluding clause of this verse proves the contrary, and shows that he expected nothing from God but through the greatness of his mercy. Shame on those who, with this evidence before them, brand this good man with the epithet of workmonger! a man who, in inward holiness, outward usefulness, and genuine love to God and man, was worth ten score of such self-called believers.

**Verse 24. *Half in the speech of Ashdod*** There were children in the same family by Jewish and Philistine mothers. As the Jewish mother would always speak to her children in Hebrew or Chaldee, so they learnt to speak these languages; and as the Ashdod mother would always speak to her children in the Ashdod language, so they learnt that tongue. Thus there were, in the same family, children who could not understand each other;

half, or one part, speaking one language, and the other part another. Children of different wives did not ordinarily mingle together; and the wives had separate apartments. This is a better explanation than that which intimates that the same child spoke a jargon, half Ashdod and half Hebrew.

**Verse 25. *I contended with them*** Proved the fact against these iniquitous fathers, in a legal assembly.

***And cursed them*** Denounced the judgments of God and the sentence of the law upon them.

***Smote certain of them*** Had them punished by whipping.

***And plucked off their hair*** Had them shaven, as a mark of the greatest ignominy.

***And made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give*** Caused them to bind themselves by an oath, that they would make no intermarriages with those who were not of the seed of Israel.

**Verse 26. *Did not Solomon*** Have you not had an awful example before you? What a heavy curse did Solomon's conduct bring upon himself and upon the people, for a conduct such as yours?

**Verse 27. *Shall we then hearken unto you*** If God spared not Solomon, who was so much beloved of Him, shall we spare you, who by your conduct are bringing down God's judgments upon Israel?

**Verse 28. *One of the sons of Joiada*** This was Manasseh, brother of Jaddua, son of Joiada, and grandson of Eliashib the high priest.

***I chased him from me.*** Struck him off the list of the priests, and deemed him utterly unworthy of all connection and intercourse with truly religious people.

**Verse 29. *Because they have defiled the priesthood*** God, therefore, will remember their iniquities against them, and punish them for their transgressions. These words of Nehemiah are to be understood declaratively.



**Verse 31. *For the wood-offering*** This was a most necessary regulation: without it the temple service could not have gone forward; and therefore Nehemiah mentions this as one of the most important services he had rendered to his nation. See chap. 10:34.

***Remember me, O my God, for good.*** This has precisely the same meaning with, O my God, have mercy upon me! and thus alone it should be understood.

OF Nehemiah the Jews speak as one of the greatest men of their nation. His concern for his country, manifested by such unequivocal marks, entitles him to the character of the first patriot that ever lived. In the course of the Divine providence, he was a captive in Babylon; but there his excellences were so apparent, that he was chosen by the Persian king to fill an office the most respectable and the most confidential in the whole court. Here he lived in ease and affluence; he lacked no manner of thing that was good; and here he might have continued to live, in the same affluence and in the same confidence: but he could enjoy neither, so long as his people were distressed, the sepulchres of his fathers trodden under foot, the altars of his God overturned, and his worship either totally neglected or corrupted. He sought the peace of Jerusalem; he prayed to God for it; and was willing to sacrifice wealth, ease, and safety, and even life itself, if he might be the instrument of restoring the desolations of Israel. And God, who saw the desire of his heart, and knew the excellences with which he had endowed him, granted his request, and gave him the high honor of restoring the desolated city of his ancestors, and the pure worship of their God. On this account he has been considered by several as an expressive type of Jesus Christ, and many parallels have been shown in their lives and conduct.

I have already, in several notes, vindicated him from all mercenary and interested views, as well as from all false notions of religion, grounded on human merit. For disinterestedness, philanthropy, patriotism, prudence, courage, zeal, humanity, and every virtue that constitutes a great mind, and proves a soul in deep communion with God, Nehemiah will ever stand conspicuous among the greatest men of the Jewish nation, and an exemplar worthy to be copied by the first patriots in every nation under heaven.

It has already been observed that, in the Jewish canon, Ezra and Nehemiah make but one book; and that both have been attributed, but without

reason, to the same author: hence the Syriac version ends with this colophon-The end of the book of Ezra, the scribe, in which are contained two thousand three hundred and sixty-one verses.

### **MASORETIC NOTES.**

Ezra and Nehemiah contain six hundred and eighty-eight verses. Middle verse is Nehemiah 3:32. Sections, ten.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

OF

## ESTHER

*THE son and successor of the famous Persian king Xerxes was Artaxerxes, surnamed Longimanus, or, in Persian, [P] Ardsheer Diraz dest, the long-handed Ardshur.* This prince, on coming to the throne, had powerful opponents and competitors in the children of Artabanus, uncle to Xerxes, and in his own brother Hystaspes. The former, and their adherents, he overthrew in a bloody battle; and in the following year obtained a complete victory over his brother, and totally subdued the Bactrians, who had espoused his cause: and thus rendered himself the undisputed possessor of the Persian empire. About his third year, which was 462 before Christ, the history of Esther begins, which, in its connection with the Persian history, is thus ably introduced by Dr. Prideaux:—

“After Artaxerxes had obtained these successes, and thereby firmly settled himself in the peaceable possession of the whole Persian empire, (Esther i.) he appointed a solemn rejoicing on this account: and caused it to be celebrated in the city of Shushan, or Susa, in feasting and shows, for the term of a hundred and eighty days; on the conclusion of which he gave a great feast for all the princes and people that were then in Shushan, for seven days; and Vashti, the queen, at the same time, made a like feast in her apartment for the women. On the seventh day, the king’s heart being merry with wine, he commanded the seven chamberlains to bring Queen Vashti before him, with the crown royal on her head, that he might show to the princes and people her beauty. But for her thus to show herself in such an assembly being contrary to the usage of the Persians, and appearing to her, as indeed it was, very indecent, and much unbecoming the modesty of a lady, as well as the dignity of her station, she refused to comply, and would not come; whereon the king, being very much incensed,

called his seven counsellors to take advice with them about it, who, fearing this might be a bad example through the whole empire, in encouraging women to contemn and disobey their husbands, advised that the king should put Vashti away for ever from him, and give her royal state to another, that should be better than her; and by his royal edict, give command throughout the whole empire that all wives should pay honor and obedience to their husbands, and that every man should rule absolutely in his own house. Which advice pleasing the king, he commanded it accordingly to be put in execution; and Vashti never more after that came again into the king's presence: for the decree whereby she was removed from him was registered among the laws of the Medes and Persians, and therefore it could never again be altered. After this, orders were given out through the whole empire for the gathering together at the palace at Shushan all the fair virgins in every province, that out of them one might be chosen whom the king should best like to be made queen in her place. At the time when this collection of virgins was made, (Esther 2..) there lived in Shushan a certain Jew named Mordecai, who was of the descendants of those who had been carried captive to Babylon with Jeconiah king of Judah, and, by his attendance at the king's gate, seems to have been one of the porters of the royal palace. He, having no children, did bring up Hadassah, his uncle's daughter, and adopted her as his own. This young woman, being very beautiful and fair, was made choice of among other virgins on this occasion; and was carried to the king's palace, and there committed to the care of Hege, the king's chamberlain, who was appointed to have the custody of these virgins; whom she pleased so well by her good carriage, that he showed her favor before all the other virgins under his care; and therefore he assigned her the best apartment of the house, and provided her first with those things that were requisite for her purification: for the custom was, that every virgin thus taken into the palace for the king's use was to go through a course of purification, by sweet oils and perfumes, for a whole year; and therefore Hadassah, having been, by the favor of the chamberlain, of the earliest provided with these things, was one of the first that was prepared and made ready for the king's bed, and therefore was one of the soonest that was called to it. The term, therefore, of her purification being accomplished, her turn came to go in unto the king; who was so much pleased with her that he often called her by name, which he used not to do but to those only of his women

whom he was much delighted with. Esther growing still farther in the king's favor, and gaining his affections beyond all the rest of the women, (Esther 2.,) he advanced her to higher honor; and on the tenth day of the tenth month, which falls about the end of our year, did put the royal diadem upon her head, and declared her queen in the place of Vashti; and in consequence thereof, made a solemn feast for his princes and servants, which was called Esther's feast; and, in honor of her, at the same time made a release of taxes to the provinces, and gave donatives and presents to all that attended him, according to the grandeur and dignity of his royal estate. Haman, an Amalekite, of the posterity of Agag, who was king of Amalek, in the time of Saul, growing to be the chief favourite of King Artaxerxes, all the king's servants were commanded to pay reverence unto him, and bow before him; and all of them obeyed the king's order but Mordecai the Jew, who, sitting in the king's gate, according to his office, paid not any reverence to Haman at such times as he passed by into the palace, neither bowed he at all to him; at which, being told, he was exceedingly displeased: but scorning to lay hands on one man only, and being informed that he was a Jew, he resolved, in revenge of this affront, to destroy, not only him, but also his whole nation with him; and to this act he was not a little excited by the ancient enmity which was between them and the people of whom he was descended; and therefore, for the accomplishing of this design, on the first day of the first month, that is, in the month Nisan, he called together his diviners, to find out what day would be the most fortunate for the putting this plan into execution: and they having, according to the manner of divination then in use among those Eastern people, cast lots first upon each month, did thereby determine for the thirteenth day of the twelfth month following, called Adar, as the day which they judged would be the most lucky for the accomplishing of what he purposed: whereon he forthwith went in unto the king; and having insinuated to him that there was a certain people dispersed all over his empire who did not keep the king's laws, but followed laws of their own, diverse from the laws of all other people, to the disturbance of the good order of his kingdom, and the breach of that uniformity whereby it ought to be governed; and that, therefore, it was not for the king's profit that they should any longer be suffered; he proposed, and gave counsel that they should be all destroyed and extirpated out of the whole empire of Persia; and urged it as that which was necessary for the establishing of the

peace and good order of his government: to which having gained the king's consent, and an order that on the thirteenth day of Adar following, according as was determined by the divination of the lots, it should be put in execution, he called the king's scribes together to write the decree; and it being drawn as he proposed, on the thirteenth day of the same month of Nisan copies thereof were written out, and sent into all the provinces of the empire, commanding the king's lieutenants, governors, and all other his officers in every one of them, to destroy, kill, and cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even on the thirteenth day of Adar following; and to take the spoil of them for a prey: which day was full eleven months after the date of the decree. The lot which seems to have pointed out that day appears to have been directed by the special providence of God, that so long a space intervening, there might be time enough to take such measures as should be proper to prevent the mischief intended. It is hard to find a reason for Mordecai's refusing to pay his respect to Haman, which may be sufficient to excuse him for thus exposing himself and all his nation to that destruction which it had like to have drawn upon them. That which is commonly said is, that it was the same adoration which was made to the king of Persia; and that, consisting in the bowing of the knee, and the prostration of the whole body to the ground, it was avoided by Mordecai, upon a notion which he had of its being idolatrous: but this being the common compliment paid to the kings of Persia, by all that were admitted into their presence, it was no doubt paid to this very king by Ezra and Nehemiah, when they had access to him, and after also by Mordecai himself; for otherwise he could not have obtained that admission into his presence, and that advancement in his palace, which was afterwards there granted unto him; and if it were not idolatrous to pay this adoration to the king, neither was it idolatrous to pay it to Haman. The Greeks would not pay this respect to the kings of Persia out of pride; and excepting Themistocles, and two or three others, none of them could ever be brought to it. I will not say that this was the case with Mordecai in respect to Haman: it seems most probable that it was from a cause that was personal in Haman only. Perhaps it was because Haman, being of the race of the Amalekites, he looked upon him as under the curse which God had denounced against that nation; and therefore thought himself obliged not to give that honor to him. And if all the rest of the Jews thought the same, this might seem reason enough to

him to extend his wrath against the whole nation, and to meditate the destruction of them all in revenge. But whatever was the cause that induced Mordecai to refuse the payment of this respect to the king's favourite, this provoked that favourite to procure the decree above mentioned, for the utter extirpation of the whole Jewish nation in revenge for it. When Mordecai heard of this decree, he made great lamentation, as did also all the Jews of Shushan with him; and therefore, putting on sackcloth, he sat in this mournful garb without the king's gate, (for he would not be allowed to enter within it in that dress,) which being told Esther, she sent to him to know what the matter was. Whereon Mordecai acquainted her with the whole state of the case; and sent her a copy of the decree, that she might fully see the mischief that was intended her people; to absolutely destroy them, and root them out from the face of the earth: and therefore commanded her forthwith to go in unto the king and make supplication for them. At first she excused herself, because of the law, whereby it was ordained that whosoever, whether man or woman, should come in unto the king in the inner court who was not called for, should be put to death, excepting such only to whom the king should hold out the golden scepter in his hand that he might live; and she was afraid of hazarding her life in this cause. Whereon Mordecai, sending to her, again told her, that the decree extended universally to all of her nation, without any exception, and that, if it came to execution, she must not expect to escape more than any other of her people; that Providence seemed to have advanced her on purpose for this work; but if she refused to act her part in it, then deliverance should come some other way, and she and her father's house should perish; for he was fully persuaded that God would not suffer his people to be thus totally destroyed.

“Whereon Esther, resolving to put her life on the hazard for the safety of her people, desired Mordecai that he and all the Jews then in Shushan should fast three days for her, and offer up prayer and humble supplication that God would prosper her in the undertaking: which being accordingly done, on the third day Esther put on her royal apparel and went in unto the king, while he was sitting upon his throne in the inner part of his palace. And as soon as he saw her standing in the court he showed favor unto her, and held out his golden scepter; and Esther, going near and touching the top of it, had thereby her life secured unto her: and

when the king asked her what her petition was, at first she only desired that he and Haman would come to a banquet which she had prepared for him.

“And when Haman was called, and the king and he were at the banquet, he asked her again of her petition, promising it should be granted her to the half of his kingdom: but then she desired only that the king and Haman should come again to the like banquet on the next day, intimating that she would then make known her request unto him. Her intention in claiming thus to entertain the king twice at her banquet before she made known her petition unto him was, that thereby she might the more endear herself unto him, and dispose him the better to grant the request which she had to make unto him.

“Haman, being proud of the honor of being thus admitted alone with the king to the queen’s banquet, went home to his house much puffed up: but on his return thither, seeing Mordecai sitting at the gate of the palace, and still refusing to bow unto him; this moved his indignation to such a degree, that on his coming to his house, and calling his friends about him to relate to them the great honor that was done to him by the king and queen, and the high advancement which he had obtained in the kingdom, he could not forbear complaining of the disrespect and affront that was offered him by Mordecai. Whereon they advised him to cause a gallows to be built of fifty cubits in height, and next morning to ask the king to have Mordecai hanged thereon: and accordingly he ordered the gallows immediately to be made; and went early the next morning to the palace, for the obtaining of the grant from the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. But that morning the king awaking sooner than ordinary, and not being able to compose himself again to sleep, he called for the book of the records and chronicles of the kingdom, and caused them to be read unto him; wherein finding an account of the conspiracy of Bigthan and Teresh, and that it was discovered by Mordecai the Jew, the king inquired what honor had been done to him for the same. And being told that nothing had been done for him, he inquired who was in the court; and being told that Haman was standing there, he ordered him to be called in, and asked of him what should be done to the man whom the king delighted to honor: whereon Haman, thinking this honor was intended for himself, gave advice that the royal apparel should be brought which the king used to wear, and the horse which he kept for



his own riding, and the crown which used to be set upon his head; and that this apparel and horse should be delivered into the hands of one of the king's most noble princes, that he might array therewith the man whom the king delighted to honor, and bring him on horseback through the whole city, and proclaim before him 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.' Whereon the king commanded him forthwith to take the apparel and horse, and do this to Mordecai the Jew, who sat in the king's gate, in reward for his discovery of the treason of the two eunuchs: all which Haman having been forced to do in obedience to the king's command, he returned with great sorrow to his house, lamenting the disappointment and great mortification he had met with in being thus forced to pay such signal honor to his enemy, whom he had intended to have hanged on the gallows which he had provided for him. And on his relating this to his friends, they all told him, that if this Mordecai were of the seed of the Jews, this bad omen foreboded that he should not prevail against them, but should surely fall before him. While they were thus talking, one of the queen's chamberlains came to Haman's house to hasten him to the banquet: and seeing the gallows which had been set up the night before, fully informed himself of the intent for which it was prepared. On the king's and Haman's sitting down to the banquet, the king asked again of Esther what was her petition, with like promise that it should be granted to her to the half of his kingdom: whereon she humbly prayed the king that her life might be given her on her petition, and her people at her request; for that a design was laid for the destruction of her and all her kindred and nation. At which the king asking, with much anger, who it was that durst do this thing, she told him that Haman then present was the author of the wicked plot; and laid the whole of it open to the king. Whereon the king rose up with much wrath from the banquet, and walked out into the garden adjoining; which Haman perceiving, he fell down before the queen upon the bed on which she was sitting, to supplicate for his life; in which posture the king having found him upon his return, spoke out in great passion, What, will he force the queen before me in the house? At which words the servants present immediately covered his face, as was then the usage to condemned persons; and the chamberlain, who had that day called Haman to the banquet, acquainting the king with the gallows he saw in his house there prepared for Mordecai, who had saved the king's life in detecting the treason of the two eunuchs, the king ordered that he

should be forthwith hanged thereon, which was accordingly done; and all his house, goods, and riches, were given to Queen Esther; and she appointed Mordecai to be her steward to manage the same. On the same day the queen made the king acquainted with the relation which Mordecai had unto her; whereon the king took him into his favor, and advanced him to great power, riches, and dignity in the empire; and made him the keeper of his signet, in the same manner as Haman had been before. But still the decree for the destruction of the Jews remaining in its full force, the queen petitioned the king a second time to put away this mischief from them; but, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, nothing being to be reversed which had been decreed and written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's seal, and the decree procured by Haman against the Jews having been thus written and sealed, it could not be recalled. All therefore that the king could do, in compliance with her request, was, to give the Jews, by a new decrees such a power to defend themselves against such as should assault them, as might render the former decree ineffectual: and for that end he bid Esther and Mordecai draw such a decree in words as strong as could be devised, that so the former might be hindered from being executed, though it could not be annulled. And therefore the king's scribes being again called on the twenty-third day of the third month, a new decree was drawn just two months and ten days after the former; wherein the king granted to the Jews, which were in every city of the Persian empire, full license to gather themselves together and stand for their lives; and to destroy, slay, and cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that should assault them, with their little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. And this decree being written in the king's hand, and sealed with his seal, copies thereof were drawn out, and especial messengers were despatched with them into all the provinces of the empire.

“The thirteenth day of Adar drawing near, when the decree obtained by Haman for the destruction of the Jews was to be put into execution, their adversaries everywhere prepared to act against them, according to the contents of it: and the Jews, on the other hand, by virtue of the second decree which was obtained in their favor, by Esther and Mordecai, gathered themselves together in every city where they dwelt, throughout all the provinces of King Artaxerxes, to provide for their safety: so that on

the said thirteenth of Adar, through the means of these two different and discordant decrees, a war was commenced between the Jews and their enemies throughout the whole Persian empire. But the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, the deputies, and the other officers of the king, knowing with what power Esther and Mordecai were then invested, through fear of them so favored the Jews, that they prevailed everywhere against those that rose against them; and on that day, throughout the whole empire, slew of their enemies seven thousand five hundred persons; and in the city of Shushan, on that day and the next, eight hundred more; among whom were the ten sons of Haman, whom by a special order from the king they caused all to be hanged; perhaps upon the same gallows on which Haman, their father, had been hanged before. These transactions took place in the thirteenth year of Artaxerxes, about four hundred and fifty-two years before Christ.” The reader is requested to refer to the notes on all these passages.

“The Jews, being delivered thus from this dangerous design which threatened them with nothing less than total extirpation, made great rejoicings for it on the two days following, that is, on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the said month Adar: and by the order of Esther and Mordecai these two days, with the thirteenth that preceded them, were set apart, and consecrated to be annually observed for ever after in commemoration thereof; the thirteenth as a fast, because of the destruction on that day intended to have been brought upon them, and the other two as a feast because of their deliverance from it; and both this fast and feast they constantly observe every year on those days, even to this time. The fast they call the fast of Esther; and the feast, the feast of Purim, from the Persian word Purim, which signifies lots; because it was by the casting of lots that Haman did set out this time for their destruction. This feast is the Bacchanals of the Jews, which they celebrate with all manner of rejoicing, mirth, and jollity; and therein indulge themselves in all manner of luxurious excesses, especially in drinking wine, even to drunkenness; which they think part of the duty of the solemnity, because it was by means of the wine banquet, they say, that Esther made the king’s heart merry, and brought him into that good humor which inclined him to grant the request which she made unto him for their deliverance; and therefore they think they ought to make their hearts merry also, when they celebrate the

commemoration of it. During this festival the book of Esther is solemnly read in all their synagogues from the beginning to the end; at which they are all to be present, men, women, children, and servants, because all these had their part in this deliverance which Esther obtained for them. And as often as the name of Haman occurs in the reading of this book, the usage is for them all to clap with their hands, and stamp with their feet, and cry out: Let his memory perish.

“This is the last feast of the year among them, for the next that follows is the Passover, which always falls in the middle of the month, which begins the Jewish year.”

# THE BOOK

OF

# ESTHER

## Chronological Notes relative to this Book

- Year from the Creation, according to Archbishop Usher, 3540.
- Year before the birth of Christ, 460.
- Year before the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 464.
- Year of the Julian Period, 4250.
- Year since the flood of Noah, 1904.
- Year of the Cali Yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 2638.
- Year from the vocation of Abram, 1458.
- Year from the destruction of Troy, 721.
- Year from the foundation of Solomon's temple. 547.
- Year since the division of Solomon's monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 511.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, 421.
- Year since Coroebus won the prize at the Olympic games, 313.
- First year of the seventy-ninth Olympiad.
- Year of the Varronian era of the building of Rome, 290.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Cato and the Fasti Consulares, 289.
- Year from the building of Rome according to Polybius the historian, 288.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 284.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, 284.
- Year since the commencement of the first Messenian war, 280.
- Year since the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, 258.
- Year since the commencement of the second Messenian war, 222.

- Year from the destruction of Solomon's temple by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, 125.
- Year since the publication of the famous edict of Cyrus, king of Persia, empowering the Jews to rebuild their temple, 72.
- Year since the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses, 62.
- Year since the abolition of the tyranny of the Pisistratidae at Athens, 43.
- Year since the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome, which put an end to the regal government of the Romans, 44.
- Year since the famous battle of Marathon, 26.
- Year after the commencement of the third Messenian war, 2.
- Year before the commencement of the first sacred war concerning the temple at Delphi, 17.
- Year before the commencement of the celebrated Peloponnesian war, 34.
- Year before the celebrated retreat of the ten thousand Greeks, and the expulsion of the thirty tyrants from Athens by Thrasybulus, 65.
- Year before the commencement of the era of the Seleucidae, 152.
- Year before the formation of the famous Achaean league, 183.
- Year before the commencement of the first Punic war, 200.
- Year before the fall of the Macedonian empire, 296.
- Year before the destruction of Carthage by Scipio, and of Corinth by Mummius, 317.
- Year before the commencement of the Jugurthine war, which continued five years, 354.
- Year before the commencement of the Social war, which continued for five years, and was finished by Sylla, 374.
- Year before the commencement of the Mithridatic war, which continued for twenty-six years, 376.
- Year before the commencement of the Servile war, under Spartacus, 392.
- Year before the extinction of the reign of the Seleucidae in Syria, on the conquest of that country by Pompey, 399.
- Year before the era of the Roman emperors, 433.
- Year of Archidamus, king of Lacedaemon, and of the family of the Proclidae, or Eurypontidae, 6.

- Year of Plistoanax, king of Lacedaemon, and of the family of the Eurysthenidae, or Agidae, 3.
- Year of Alexander, the tenth king of Macedon, 34.
- Year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, 1.
- Roman Consuls, Aulus Postumius, and Sp. Furius.

## CHAPTER 1

*Ahasuerus makes royal feasts for his nobles and people, 1-9. Vashti is sent for by the king, but refuses to come, 10-12. Vashti is disgraced; and a law made for the subjection of women, 13-22.*

The whole history of this book in its connected order, with the occurrences in the Persian empire at that time, will be found in the introduction: to which the reader is referred.

Concerning the author of this book there are several opinions: some attribute the work to Ezra; some to one Joachim, a high priest; others, to the men of the Great Synagogue; and others to Mordecai. This latter is the most likely opinion: nor is that to be disregarded which gives to Mordecai for co-partner Ezra himself; though it is likely that the conclusion, from Esther 9:23 to the end of the book, was inserted by another hand, and at a later time. Though some Christians have hesitated to receive the book of Esther into the sacred canon; yet it has always been received by the Jews, not only as perfectly authentic, but also as one of the most excellent of their sacred books. They call it מגילה megillah, THE VOLUME, by way of eminence; and hold it in the highest estimation. That it records the history of a real fact, the observation of the feast of Purim, to the present day, is a sufficient evidence. Indeed, this is one of the strongest evidences that any fact can have, viz., that, to commemorate it, a certain rite, procession, feast, or the like, should have been instituted at the time, which, without intermission, has been continued annually through every generation of that people, and in whatsoever place they or parties of them may have sojourned, to the present day. This is the fact concerning the feast of Purim here mentioned; which the Jews, in all places of their dispersion, have uninterruptedly celebrated, and do still continue to celebrate, from the time of their deliverance from the massacre intended by Haman to the present time. Copies of this book, widely differing from each other, exist in Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Greek, and Latin. All these differ much from the Hebrew text, particularly the Greek and the Chaldee: the former has many additional paragraphs; and the latter, as it exists in the London



Polyglot, contains five times more than the Hebrew text. To notice all the various readings, additions, and paraphrases, in the above copies, would require a volume of no inconsiderable magnitude. The reader who is curious may consult the above Polyglot. This book does not appear to be extant in Arabic, or in any other of the Oriental languages, besides the Hebrew and Syriac.

The question may naturally arise, What was the original of this book? or, In what language was it written? Though learned men in general decide in favor of a Hebrew original, yet there are many reasons which might be urged in favor of the Persian. Several of the proper names are evidently of a Persian origin; and no doubt all the others are so; but they are so transformed by passing through the Hebrew, that they are no longer discernible. The Hebrew has even retained some of the Persian words, having done little else than alter the character, e.g., Esther, Mehuman, Mishak, Melzar, Vashti, Shushan, Pur, Darius, Paradise, etc., several of which will be noted in their proper places. The Targum in the London Polyglot is widely different from that in the Complutum, Antwerp, and Paris editions. The principal additions in the Greek are carefully marked in the London Polyglot, but are too long and too numerous to be inserted here. It is a singular circumstance that the name of God does not once occur in the whole of this book as it stands in Hebrew.

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. *Now it came to pass*** The Ahasuerus of the Romans, the Artaxerxes of the Greeks and Ardsheer of the Persians, are the same. Some think that this Ahasuerus was Darius, the son of Hystaspes; but Prideaux and others maintain that he was Artaxerxes Longimanus.

***Reigned from India even unto Ethiopia*** This is nearly the same account that is given by Xenophon. How great and glorious the kingdom of Cyrus was beyond all the kingdoms of Asia, was evident from this: ὄρισθη μὲν πρῶς εὐ τῆ ἐρυθρᾷ θαλάττῃ· πρὸς ἀρκτὸν δὲ τῷ εὐξείνῳ πόντῳ· πρὸς ἐσπερὰν δὲ κυπρῷ καὶ αἰγυπτῷ· πρὸς μεσημβριαν δὲ αἰθιοπία. “It was bounded on the east by the Red Sea; on the north by the Euxine Sea; on the west by Cyprus and Egypt; and on the south by Ethiopia.” -CYROP. lib. viii., p. 241, edit. Steph. 1581.

**Verse 2. *Sat on the throne of his kingdom*** Having subdued all his enemies, and brought universal peace to his empire. See the commencement of the introduction.

***Shushan the palace***— The ancient city of Susa, now called [P] Shuster by the Persians. This, with Ecbatana and Babylon, was a residence of the Persian kings. The word **הַבִּירָה** habbirah, which we render the palace, should be rendered the city, **εν σουσοις τη πολει**, as in the Septuagint.

**Verse 4. *The riches of his glorious kingdom*** Luxury was the characteristic of the Eastern monarchs, and particularly of the Persians. In their feasts, which were superb and of long continuance, they made a general exhibition of their wealth, grandeur, etc., and received the highest encomiums from their poets and flatterers. Their ostentation on such occasions passed into a proverb: hence Horace:—

*Persicos odi, puer, apparatus:  
Displacent nexae philyra coronae;  
Mitte sectari, rosa quo locorum  
Sera moretur.*

*I tell thee, boy, that I detest  
The grandeur of a Persian feast;  
Nor for me the linden's rind  
Shall the flowery chaplet bind.*

*Then search not where the curious rose  
Beyond his season loitering grows.*

FRANCIS.

**Verse 5. *A feast unto all the people*** The first was a feast for the nobles in general; this, for the people of the city at large.

***In the court of the garden*** As the company was very numerous that was to be received, no apartments in the palace could be capable of containing them; therefore the court of the garden was chosen.

**Verse 6. *White, green, and blue hangings*** It was customary, on such occasions, not only to hang the place about with elegant curtains of the above colors, as Dr. Shaw and others have remarked, but also to have a canopy of rich stuffs suspended on cords from side to side of the place in which they feasted. And such courts were ordinarily paved with different

coloured marbles, or with tiles painted, as above specified. And this was the origin of the Musive or Mosaic work, well known among the Asiatics, and borrowed from them by the Greeks and the Romans.

The beds of gold and silver mentioned here were the couches covered with gold and silver cloth, on which the guests reclined.

**Verse 7. *Vessels being diverse*** They had different services of plate.

**Verse 8. *None did compel: for so the king had appointed*** Every person drank what he pleased; he was not obliged to take more than he had reason to think would do him good.

Among the Greeks, each guest was obliged to keep the round, or leave the company: hence the proverb  $\eta \pi\iota\theta\iota, \eta \alpha\pi\iota\theta\iota$ ; Drink or begone. To this Horace refers, but gives more license:—

*Pasco libatis dapibus; prout cuique libido est.  
Siccat inaequales calices conviva, solutus  
Legibus insanis: seu quis capit acria fortis  
Pocula; seu modicis humescit aetius.*

*HORAT. Sat. lib. ii., s. vi., ver. 67.*

*There, every guest may drink and fill  
As much or little as he will;  
Exempted from the Bedlam rules  
Of roaring prodigals and fools.*

*Whether, in merry mood or whim,  
He fills his goblet to the brim;  
Or, better pleased to let it pass,  
Is cheerful with a moderate glass.*

*FRANCIS.*

\At the Roman feasts there was a person chosen by the cast of dice, who was the Arbiter bibendi, and prescribed rules to the company, which all were obliged to observe. References to this custom may be seen in the same poet. ODAR. lib. i., Od. iv., ver. 18:—

*Non regna vini sortiere talis.*

And in lib. ii., Od. vii., ver. 25:—

— *Quem Venus arbitrum  
Dicet bibendi?*

Mr. Herbert, in his excellent poem, *The Church Porch*, has five verses on this vile custom and its rule:—

*Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame  
When once it is within thee, but before  
Mayst rule it as thou list; and pour the shame,*

*Which it would pour on thee, upon the floor.  
It is most just to throw that on the ground,  
Which would throw me there if I keep the round.*

*He that is drunken may his mother kill,  
Big with his sister; he hath lost the reins;  
Is outlawed by himself. All kinds of ill*

*Did with his liquor slide into his veins.  
The drunkard forfeits man; and doth divest  
All worldly right, save what he hath by beast.*

Nothing too severe can be said on this destructive practice.

**Verse 9. Also *Vashti the queen***— [P] *Vashti* is a mere Persian word; and signifies a beautiful or excellent woman.

***Made a feast for the women*** The king, having subdued all his enemies, left no competitor for the kingdom; and being thus quietly and firmly seated on the throne, made this a time of general festivity. As the women of the East never mingle with the men in public, *Vashti* made a feast for the Persian ladies by themselves; and while the men were in the court of the garden, the women were in the royal house.

**Verse 10. *He commanded Mehuman*** All these are doubtless Persian names; but so disguised by passing through a Hebrew medium, that some of them can scarcely be known. [P] *Mehuman* signifies a stranger or guest. We shall find other names and words in this book, the Persian etymology of which may be easily traced.

**Verse 11. *To bring Vashti the queen*** The Targum adds *naked*.

***For she was fair to look on.***— Hence she had her name [P] *Vashti*, which signifies beautiful. See *Esther* 1:9.

**Verse 12. *Vashti refused to come*** And much should she be commended for it. What woman, possessing even a common share of prudence and modesty, could consent to expose herself to the view of such a group of drunken Bacchanalians? Her courage was equal to her modesty: she would resist the royal mandate, rather than violate the rules of chaste decorum.

Her contempt of worldly grandeur, when brought in competition with what every modest woman holds dear and sacred, is worthy of observation. She well knew that this act of disobedience would cost her her crown, if not her life also: but she was regardless of both, as she conceived her virtue and honor were at stake.

Her humility was greatly evidenced in this refusal. She was beautiful; and might have shown herself to great advantage, and have had a fine opportunity of gratifying her vanity, if she had any: but she refused to come.

Hail, noble woman! be thou a pattern to all thy sex on every similar occasion! Surely, every thing considered, we have few women like Vashti; for some of the highest of the land will dress and deck themselves with the utmost splendor, even to the selvedge of their fortunes, to exhibit themselves at balls, plays, galas, operas, and public assemblies of all kinds, (nearly half naked,) that they may be seen and admired of men, and even, to the endless reproach and broad suspicion of their honor and chastity, figure away in masquerades! Vashti must be considered at the top of her sex:—

*Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno.*

*A black swan is not half so rare a bird.*

**Verse 13. *To the wise men*** Probably the lawyers.

**Verse 14. *And the next unto him—the seven princes*** Probably, the privy counsellors of the king. Which saw the king's face—were at all times admitted to the royal presence.

**Verse 16. *Vashti-hath not done wrong to the king only*** This reasoning or arguing was inconsequent and false. Vashti had not generally disobeyed the king, therefore she could be no precedent for the general conduct of the

Persian women. She disobeyed only in one particular; and this, to serve a purpose, Memucan draws into a general consequence; and the rest came to the conclusion which he drew, being either too drunk to be able to discern right from wrong, or too intent on reducing the women to a state of vassalage, to neglect the present favorable opportunity.

**Verse 18. *The ladies of Persia*** שָׂרוֹת saroth, the princesses; but the meaning is very well expressed by our term ladies.

**Verse 19. *That it be not altered*** Let it be inserted among the permanent laws, and made a part of the constitution of the empire. Perhaps the Persians affected such a degree of wisdom in the construction of their laws, that they never could be amended, and should never be repeated. And this we may understand to be the ground of the saying, The laws of the Medes and Persians, that change not.

**Verse 22. *That every man should bear rule in his own house*** Both God's law and common sense taught this from the foundation of the world. And is it possible that this did not obtain in the Persian empire, previously to this edict? The twentieth verse has another clause, That all wives shall give to their husbands honor, both to great and small. This also was universally understood. This law did nothing. I suppose the parade of enactment was only made to deprive honest Vashti of her crown. The Targum adds, "That each woman should speak the language of her husband." If she were even a foreigner, she should be obliged to learn and speak the language of the king. Perhaps there might be some common sense in this, as it would oblige the foreigner to devote much time to study and improvement; and, consequently, to make her a better woman, and a better wife. But there is no proof that this was a part of the decree. But there are so many additions to this book in the principal versions, that we know not what might have made a part of it originally.

## CHAPTER 2

*The counsellors advise that a selection of virgins should be made throughout the empire, out of whom the king should choose one to be queen in place of Vashti, 1-4. Account of Mordecai and his cousin Esther, 5-7*

been chaste; whether she were with child or not, that the king might not be imposed on, and be obliged to father a spurious offspring, which might have been the case had not this precaution been used.

Instead of the oil or myrrh, the Targum says it was the oil of unripe olives which caused the hair to fall off, and rendered the skin delicate.

**Verse 5. *Whose name was Mordecai*** The Targum says, “He was the son of Jair, the son of Shimea, the son of Gera, the son of Kish.” And “this was the same Shimea that cursed David; and whom David forbade Joab to slay because he saw, in the spirit of prophecy, that he was to be the predecessor of Esther and Mordecai; but when he became old, and incapable of having children, David ordered Solomon to put him to death.”

**Verse 7. *He brought up Hadassah*** **הדסה** hadassah signifies a myrtle in Chaldee: this was probably her first or Babylonish name. When she came to the Persian court, she was called Esther, [P] aster, or [P] sitara, which signifies a star in Persian: the name is undoubtedly Persian. Esther was the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, and therefore must have been Mordecai’s cousin, though the Vulgate and Josephus make her Mordecai’s niece: but it is safest here to follow the Hebrew.

**Verse 9. *The maiden pleased him*** He conceived a partiality for her above the rest, probably because of the propriety of her deportment, and her engaging though unassuming manners.

***Seven maidens*** These were to attend her to the bath, to anoint and adorn her, and be her servants in general.

**Verse 10. *Esther had not showed her people*** This might have prejudiced her with the king; for it was certainly no credit at the Persian court to be a Jew; and we shall find from the sequel that those who were in the Persian dominions were far from being reputable, or in a safe state. Besides, had her lineage been known, envy might have prevented her from ever having access to the king.

**Verse 12. *Six months with oil of myrrh*** See on Esther 2:3. The reason of this purification seems not to be apprehended by any writer I have seen. The most beautiful of all the young virgins of all the provinces of Babylon were to be selected; and these were taken out of all classes of the people,



indiscriminately; consequently there must have been many who were brought up in low life. Now we know that those who feed on coarse strong food, which is not easily digested, have generally a copious perspiration, which is strongly odorous; and in many, though in every respect amiable, and even beautiful, this odour is far from being pleasant. Pure, wholesome, easily digested, and nourishing aliment, with the frequent use of the hot bath, continued for twelve months. the body frequently rubbed with olive oil, will in almost every case remove all that is disagreeable of this kind. This treatment will give a healthy action to all the subcutaneous vessels, and in every respect promote health and comfort.

**Verse 13. *Whatsoever she desired*** When any of the young women were called to go to the king, it appears that it was an ordinance that whatever kind of dress stuff, color, jewels, etc., they thought best to set off their persons, and render them more engaging, should be given them.

**Verse 14. *She returned into the second house*** This was the place where the king's concubines were kept. They went out no more, and were never given in marriage to any man, and saw the king's face no more unless specially called.

***Custody of Shaashgaz***— This is probably another Persian name; [P] sheshkhunj, beardless, a proper epithet of a eunuch; or [P] sestgunj, weak loins, for the same reason. Names of this kind at once show the reason of their imposition, by describing the state of the person.

**Verse 15. *She required nothing*** She left this entirely to her friend Hege, who seems to have been intent on her success. She therefore left her decorations to his judgment alone, and went in that dress and in those ornaments which he deemed most suitable.

**Verse 16. *The tenth month-Tebeth*** Answering to part of our December and January.

**Verse 17. *Set the royal crown upon her head*** Made her what is now called in the East the SULTANA, the queen. She was the mistress of all the rest of the wives, all of whom were obliged to pay her the most profound respect.

**Verse 18. *Made a release to the provinces*** Remitted some kind of tribute or impost, in honor of Esther, at her coronation, as our kings generally do when they are crowned, ordering a discharge from prison of many who are confined for minor offenses. As it was the custom of the Persian kings to give their queens something like what is called with us the *aurum reginae*, “queen gold,” which was a tenth of all fines, etc., above what was given to the king; (for they gave them such a city to buy them clothes, another for their hair, a third for their necklaces, a fourth for their pearls, etc. ;) it is probable that, on this occasion, Esther so wishing, he relieved those cities and provinces which had before paid this queen gold from all these expenses; and this would tend greatly to make the queen popular.

**Verse 21. *Mordecai sat in the kings gate*** Mordecai might have been one of the officers of the king, as the gate was the place where such usually attended to await the king’s call. It is not likely that he was the porter; had he been only such, Haman could have removed him at once.

***Two of the king’s chamberlains*** Eunuchs. Why they conspired against the life of the king, we are not informed. The Targum says that they found out that Esther had intended to use her influence with the king to get them removed from their office, and Mordecai put in their place; therefore they determined to poison Esther, and slay the king in his bedchamber. It is very likely that they were creatures of Haman, who probably affected the kingdom, and perhaps were employed by him to remove the king, and so make his way open to the throne.

**Verse 22. *Was known to Mordecai*** Josephus says that a Jew, named Barnabasus, overheard the plot, told it to Mordecai, Mordecai to Esther, and Esther to the king, in Mordecai’s name; and he was registered as the discoverer.

**Verse 23. *It was found out*** It was proved against them, in consequence of which they were hanged. Perhaps the words על עץ ויתלו vaiyittalu al ets, they were hung upon wood or a tree, may refer to their being impaled. A pointed stake is set upright in the ground, and the culprit is taken, placed on the sharp point, and then pulled down by his legs till the stake that went in at the fundament passes up through the body and comes out by the side of the neck. A most dreadful species of punishment, in which

revenge and cruelty may glut the utmost of their malice. The culprit lives a considerable time in excruciating agonies.

It has been observed that the name of God does not once occur in this book. This is true of the Hebrew text, and all translations from it; but in the Septuagint we find the following words, in Esther 2:20, after, Esther had not showed her kindred: *ουτως γαρ ενειειλατο αυτη μαρδοχαιος, φοβεισθαι τον θεον, και ποιειν τα προσταγματα αυτου, καθως ην μετ' αυτου*; “For so Mordecai had charged her to fear GOD, and to keep his commandments, as she did when with him.” This, as far as the Septuagint is concerned, takes away the strange reproach from this book. It must be owned that it was not because there were not many fair opportunities that the sacred name has not been introduced.

## CHAPTER 3

*Ahasuerus exalts Haman the Agagite, and commands all his officers to do him reverence, which Mordecai refuses, 1-3. Haman, informed of Mordecai's refusal, plots his destruction, and that of the Jews, 4-6. Lots are cast to find out the proper time, 7. Haman accuses the Jews to Ahasuerus, counsels him to destroy them, and offers ten thousand talents of silver for the damage which the revenue might sustain by their destruction, 8, 9. The king refuses the money, but gives Haman full authority to destroy them, 10, 11. Letters are written to this effect, and sent to the king's lieutenants throughout the empire, and the thirteenth day of the month Adar is appointed for the massacre, 12-15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. *Haman-the Agagite*** Perhaps he was some descendant of that Agag, king of the Amalekites, spared by Saul, but destroyed by Samuel; and on this ground might have an antipathy to the Jews.

***Set his seat above all the princes*** Made him his prime minister, and put all the officers of state under his direction.

**Verse 2. *The king's servants, that were in the king's gate*** By servants here, certainly a higher class of officers are intended than porters; and Mordecai was one of those officers, and came to the gate with the others who were usually there in attendance to receive the commands of the king.

***Mordecai bowed not*** **לא יכרע** lo yichra. "He did not bow down;" nor did him reverence, **ולא ישתחוה** velo yishtachaveh, "nor did he prostrate himself." I think it most evident, from these two words, that it was not civil reverence merely that Haman expected and Mordecai refused; this sort of respect is found in the word **כרע** cara, to bow. This sort of reverence Mordecai could not refuse without being guilty of the most inexcusable obstinacy, nor did any part of the Jewish law forbid it. But Haman expected, what the Persian kings frequently received, a species of

Divine adoration; and this is implied in the word שַׁחָהּ shachah, which signifies that kind of prostration which implies the highest degree of reverence that can be paid to God or man, lying down flat on the earth, with the hands and feet extended, and the mouth in the dust.

The Targum, says that Haman set up a statue for himself, to which every one was obliged to bow, and to adore Haman himself. The Jews all think that Mordecai refused this prostration because it implied idolatrous adoration. Hence, in the Apocryphal additions to this book, Mordecai is represented praying thus: “Thou knowest that if I have not adored Haman, it was not through pride, nor contempt, nor secret desire of glory; for I felt disposed to kiss the footsteps of his feet (gladly) for the salvation of Israel: but I feared to give to a man that honor which I know belongs only to my God.”

**Verse 7. *The first month*** That is, of the civil year of the Jews.

***The month Nisan*** Answering to a part of our March and April.

***The twelfth year of king Ahasuerus*** According to the chronology in our Bibles, about five hundred and ten years before Christ.

***They cast Pur, that is, the lot*** This appears to be the Hebrew corruption of the pure Persian word [P] pari, which signifies any thing that happens fortuitously. There is an addition here in the Greek text that was probably in the original, and which makes this place very plain. I shall set down the whole verse, and give the Greek in a parenthesis, that it may be read consecutively with what is in the Hebrew: “In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman, from day to day, and from month to month.” (ὥστε ἀπολεσαι εν μια ημερα το γενος μαρδοχαιου, και επεσεν ο κληρος εις την τεσερακαιδεκατην του μηνος ος εστιν αδαρ, “that they might destroy in one day the people of Mordecai; and the lot fell on the fourteenth day of the month Adar.”)

We see plainly intimated by the Hebrew text that they cast lots, or used a species of divination, to find which of the twelve months would be the most favorable for the execution of Haman’s design; and, having found the desired month, then they cast lots, or used divination, to find out which day of the said month would be the lucky day for the accomplishment of

the enterprise. But the Hebrew text does not tell us the result of this divination; we are left to guess it out; but the Greek supplies this deficiency, and makes all clear. From it we find that, when they cast for the month, the month Adar was taken; and when they cast for the day, the fourteenth (Heb. thirteenth) of that month was taken.

Some have questioned whether Pur may not have signified also some game of chance, which they played before or with Haman, from day to day, to divert him from his melancholy, till the lucky time came in which he was to have the gratification of slaying all the people who were objects of his enmity; or they cast lots, or played, who should get the property of such and such opulent families. Holinshed, one of our ancient historians, informs us that, previously to the battle of Agincourt, the English army, under Henry V., were so thinned and weakened by disease, and the French army so numerous, that “Frenchmen, in the mean while, as though they had been sure of victory, made great triumphe, for the captaines had determined before how to divide the spoil; and the souldiers, the night before, had plaid the Englishmen at dice.” To this the chorus of Shakspeare alludes:—

*“Proud of their numbers, and secure of soul,  
The confident and over-lusty French  
Do the low-rated English play at dice.*

*— The poor condemned English,  
Like sacrifices by their watchful fires,  
Sit patiently and inly ruminate  
The morning’s danger; and their gestures sad,  
Investing lank-lean cheeks, and war-worn coats,  
Presenteth them unto the gazing moon  
So many horrid ghosts.*

HEN. V.

Monstrelet, who is an impartial writer, does not mention this.

Did Haman and his flatterers intend to divide the spoils of the designed-to-be-massacred Jews in some such manner as this?

**Verse 8.** *Their laws are diverse from all people* Such they certainly were; for they worshipped the true God according to his own laws; and this was not done by any other people then on the face of the earth.

**Verse 9.** *Let it be written that they may be destroyed* Let it be enacted that

Crassus, who was mentioned before, had a landed estate valued at one million six hundred and sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence.

C. Coecilius Ridorus, after having lost much in the civil war, left by will effects amounting to one million forty-seven thousand one hundred and sixty pounds.

Lentullus, the augur, is said to have possessed no less than three millions three hundred and thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three pounds six shillings and eight pence.

Apicius was worth more than nine hundred and sixteen thousand six hundred and seventy-one pounds thirteen shillings and four pence; who, after having spent in his kitchen eight hundred and thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three pounds six shillings and eight pence, and finding that he had no more left than eighty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three pounds six shillings and eight pence, considered it so little for his support, that he judged it best to put an end to his life by poison!

The superfluous furniture of M. Scaurus, which was burnt at Tusculum, was valued at no less than eight hundred and thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-two pounds thirteen shillings and four pence.

Anthony owed, at the ides or March, the sum of three hundred and thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three pounds six shillings and six pence, which he paid before the calends of April.

None of these men were in trade, to account for the circulation of such immense sums through their hands. See DICKSON'S Husband. of the Anc.

**Verse 10. *The king took his ring*** In this ring was no doubt included his privy seal, and he gave this to Haman, that when he had formed such a decree as he thought fit, he might seal it with this ring, which would give it its due force and influence among the rulers of the provinces. The privy seal of many of our sovereigns appears to have been inserted in their rings; and the seals of Eastern potentates were worn in rings upon their fingers. One such seal, once the property of the late Tippoo Sultan, lies before me; the inscription is deeply cut in silver, which is set in a massy carriage of gold. This, as fitted to the finger, he probably kept always on his hand, to



be ready to seal despatches, etc., or it might be carried by a confidential officer for the same purpose, as it seems to refer to one of the chief cutcheries, or military officers.

**Verse 12. *Unto the king's lieutenants*** אַחַשְׁדַּרְפְּנֵי achashdarpney. This is in all probability another Persian word, for there is nothing like it in the Hebrew language, nor can it be fairly deduced from any roots in that tongue. The Vulgate translates ad omnes satrapas regis, to all the satraps of the king. It is very likely that this is the true sense of the word, and that the אַחַשְׁדַּרְפְּנֵי achsadrapani, as it may be pronounced, is the Chaldee or Hebrew corruption of the Persian word [P] satraban, the plural of [P] satrab, a Persian peer, though the word is now nearly obsolete in the Persian language; for since the conquest of Persia by Mohammedanism, the names of officers are materially changed, as something of Islamism is generally connected with the titles of officers both civil and military, as well as religious.

**Verse 13. *To destroy, so kill, and to cause to perish*** To put the whole of them to death in any manner, or by every way and means.

***Take the spoil of them for a prey.*** Thus, whoever killed a Jew had his property for his trouble! And thus the hand of every man was armed against this miserable people. Both in the Greek version and in the Latin the copy of this order is introduced at length, expressing “the king’s desire to have all his dominions in quiet and prosperity; but that he is informed that this cannot be expected, while a certain detestable people are disseminated through all his provinces, who not only are not subject to the laws, but endeavor to change them; and that nothing less than their utter extermination will secure the peace and prosperity of the empire; and therefore he orders that they be all destroyed, both male and female, young and old,” etc.

**Verse 15. *The posts*** Literally, the couriers, the hircarrahs, those who carried the public despatches; a species of public functionaries, who have been in use in all nations of the world from the remotest antiquity.

***The decree was given at Shushan*** It was dated from the royal Susa, where the king then was.

*The city Shushan was perplexed.* They saw that in a short time, by this wicked measure the whole city would be thrown into confusion; for, although the Jews were the only objects of this decree, yet, as it armed the populace against them, even the Persians could not hope to escape without being spoiled, when a desperate mob had begun to taste of human blood, and enrich themselves with the property of the murdered. Besides, many Persian families had, no doubt, become united by intermarriages with Jewish families, and in such a massacre they would necessarily share the same fate with the Jews. A more impolitic, disgraceful, and cruel measure was never formed by any government; and one would suppose that the king who ordered it must have been an idiot, and the counsellors who advised it must have been madmen. But a despotic government is ever capable of extravagance and cruelty; for as it is the bane of popular freedom and happiness, so is it the disgrace of political wisdom and of all civil institutions. Despotism and tyranny in the state are the most direct curses which insulted justice can well inflict upon a sinful nation.

## CHAPTER 4

*On hearing the king's decree to exterminate the Jews, Mordecai mourns, and clothes himself in sackcloth, 1, 2. The Jews are filled with consternation, 3. Esther, perceived Mordecai in distress at the palace gate, sends her servant Hatach to inquire the reason, 4-6. Hatach returns with the information, and also the express desire of Mordecai that she should go instantly to the king, and make supplication in behalf of her people, 7-9. Esther excuses herself on the ground that she had not been called by the king for thirty days past; and that the law was such that any one approaching his presence, without express invitation, should be put to death, unless the king should, in peculiar clemency, stretch out to such persons the golden scepter, 10-12. Mordecai returns an answer, insisting on her compliance, 13, 14. She then orders Mordecai to gather all the Jews of Shushan, and fast for her success three days, night and day, and resolves to make the attempt, though at the risk of her life, 15-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1. *Mordecai rent his clothes*** He gave every demonstration of the most poignant and oppressive grief. Nor did he hide this from the city; and the Greek says that he uttered these words aloud: **αιρεται εθνος μηδεν ηδικηκος**, A people are going to be destroyed, who have done no evil!

**Verse 2. *Before the king's gate*** He could not enter into the gate, of the place where the officers waited, because he was in the habit of a mourner; for this would have been contrary to law.

**Verse 3. *Fasting, and weeping, and wailing*** How astonishing, that in all this there is not the slightest intimation given of praying to God!

**Verse 4. *Sent raiment*** She supposed that he must have been spoiled of his raiment by some means; and therefore sent him clothing.

**Verse 5. *Then called Esther for Hatach*** This eunuch the king had appointed to wait upon her, partly, as is still the case in the East, to serve

her, and partly, to observe her conduct; for no despot is ever exempt from a twofold torture, jealousy and suspicion.

**Verse 8. *That she should go in unto the king*** The Greek adds, “Remember the time of your low estate, and in what manner you have been nourished, and carried in my arms; and that Haman, who is next to the king, has got a decree for our destruction. Pray, therefore, to the Lord, and plead with the king, that we may be delivered from death.” But there is not a word of this either in the Hebrew, Syriac, or Vulgate.

**Verse 11. *Into the inner court*** We have already seen that the Persian sovereigns affected the highest degree of majesty, even to the assuming of Divine honors. No man nor woman dared to appear unveiled before them, without hazarding their lives; into the inner chamber of the harem no person ever entered but the king, and the woman he had chosen to call thither. None even of his courtiers or ministers dared to appear there; nor the most beloved of his concubines, except led thither by himself, or ordered to come to him. Here was Esther’s difficulty; and that difficulty was now increased by the circumstance of her not having been sent for to the king’s bed for thirty days. In the last verse of the preceding chapter we find that the king and Haman sat down to drink. It is very likely that this wicked man had endeavored to draw the king’s attention from the queen, that his affection might be lessened, as he must have known something of the relationship between her and Mordecai; and consequently viewed her as a person who, in all probability, might stand much in the way of the accomplishment of his designs. I cannot but think that he had been the cause why Esther had not seen the king for thirty days.

**Verse 13. *Think not-that thou shalt escape*** This confirms the suspicion that Haman knew something of the relationship between Mordecai and Esther; and therefore he gives her to understand that, although in the king’s palace, she should no more escape than the Jews.

**Verse 14. *Then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise*** He had a confidence that deliverance would come by some means; and he thought that Esther would be the most likely; and that, if she did not use the influence which her providential station gave her, she would be highly culpable.

*And who knoweth whether thou art come* As if he had said, “Is it likely that Divine providence would have so distinguished thee, and raised thee from a state of abject obscurity, merely for thy own sake? Must it not have been on some public account! Did not he see what was coming? and has he not put thee in the place where thou mayest counteract one of the most ruinous purposes ever formed?” Is there a human being who has not some particular station by an especial providence, at some particular time, in which he can be of some essential service to his neighbor, in averting evil or procuring good, if he be but faithful to the grace and opportunity afforded by this station? Who dares give a negative to these questions? We lose much, both in reference to ourselves and others, by not adverting to our providential situation and circumstances. While on this subject, I will give the reader two important sayings, from two eminent men, both keen observers of human nature, and deeply attentive in all such cases to the operations of Divine providence:—

*“To every thing there is a season; and a time  
to every purpose under heaven.  
Therefore withhold not good from them to whom it is due,  
when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.*

SOLOMON.

*There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows, and in miseries.*

SHAKESPEARE.

Has there not been a case, within time of memory, when evil was designed against a whole people, through the Hamans who had poisoned the ears of well-intentioned men; in which one poor man, in consequence of a situation into which he was brought by an astonishing providence, used the influence which his situation gave him; and, by the mercy of his God, turned the whole evil aside? By the association of ideas the following passage will present itself to the reader’s memory, who may have any acquaintance with the circumstance:—

“There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there

was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man!”

“Then said, I, Ah, Lord God! They say of me, DOTH HE NOT SPEAK PARABLES?” Rem acu tetigi.

**Verse 16. *Fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days*** What a strange thing, that still we hear nothing of prayer, nor of God! What is the ground on which we can account for this total silence? I know it not. She could not suppose there was any charm in fasting, sackcloth garments, and lying on the ground. If these were not done to turn away the displeasure of God, which seemed now to have unchained their enemies against them, what were they done for?

***If I perish, I perish.*** If I lose my life in this attempt to save my people, I shall lose it cheerfully. I see it is my duty to make the attempt; and, come what will, I am resolved to do it. She must, however, have depended much on the efficacy of the humiliations she prescribed.

## CHAPTER 5

*Esther presents herself before the king, and finds favor in his sight, 1, 2. He asks what her request is, and promises to grant it, 3. She invites him and Haman to a banquet, which they accept, 4, 5. He then desires to know her request; and she promises to make it known on the morrow, if they will again come to her banquet, 6-8. Haman, though overjoyed at the manner in which he was received by the queen, is indignant at the indifference with which he is treated by Mordecai, 9. He goes home, and complains of this conduct to his friends, and his wife Zeresh, 10-13. They counsel him to make a gallows of fifty cubits high, and to request the king that Mordecai may be hanged on it, which they take for granted the king will not refuse; and the gallows is made accordingly, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *On the third day*** Most probably the third day of the fast which she has prescribed to Mordecai and the Jews.

**Verse 2. *She obtained favor in his sight*** The Septuagint represents “the king as being at first greatly enraged when he saw Esther, because she had dared to appear before him unveiled, and she, perceiving this, was so terrified that she fainted away; on which the king, touched with tenderness, sprung from his throne, took her up in his arms, laid the golden scepter on her neck, and spoke to her in the most endearing manner.” This is more circumstantial than the Hebrew, but is not contrary to it.

***The golden scepter that was in his hand.*** That the kings of Persia did wear a golden scepter, we have the following proof in Xenophon: ὅτι οὐ τοδε το χρυσουν σκηπτρον το την βασιλειαν διασωξον εστιν, αλλ' πιστοι φιλοι σκηπτρον βασιλευσιν αληθεστατον και ασφαλεστατον. See *Cyrop.*, lib. viii., p. 139, edit. Steph. 1581. It is not, said Cyrus to his son Cambyses, the GOLDEN SCEPTRE that saves the kingdom; faithful friends are the truest and safest scepter of the empire.

**Verse 4. *Let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet*** It was necessary to invite Haman to prevent his suspicion, and that he might not take any hasty step which might have prevented the execution of the great design.

**Verse 6. *The banquet of wine*** At that part of the banquet when the wine was introduced.

**Verse 8. *I will do to-morrow*** She saw she was gaining on the king's affections; but she was not yet sufficiently confident; and therefore wished another interview, that she might ingratiate herself more fully in the king's favor, and thus secure the success of her design. But Providence disposed of things thus, to give time for the important event mentioned in the succeeding chapter.

**Verse 9. *That he stood not up, nor moved for him*** This was certainly carrying his integrity or inflexibility to the highest pitch. But still we are left to conjecture that some reverence was required, which Mordecai could not conscientiously pay.

**Verse 11. *The multitude of his children*** The Asiatic sovereigns delight in the number of their children; and this is one cause why they take so many wives and concubines.

**Verse 13. *Yet all this availeth me nothing*** Pride will ever render its possessor unhappy. He has such a high opinion of his own worth, that he conceives himself defrauded by every one who does not pay him all the respect and homage which he conceives to be his due.

The soul was made for God, and nothing but God can fill it and make it happy. Angels could not be happy in glory, when they had cast off their allegiance to their Maker. As soon as his heart had departed from God, Adam would needs go to the forbidden fruit, to satisfy a desire which was only an indication of his having been unfaithful to his God. Solomon, in all his glory, possessing every thing heart could wish, found all to be vanity and vexation of spirit; because his soul had not God for its portion. Ahab, on the throne of Israel, takes to his bed, and refuses to eat bread, not merely because he cannot get the vineyard of Naboth, but because he had not God in his heart, who could alone satisfy its desires. Haman, on the same ground, though the prime favourite of the king, is wretched because



he cannot have a bow from that man whom his heart even despised. O, how distressing are the inquietudes of vanity. And how wretched is the man who has not the God of Jacob for his help, and in whose heart Christ dwells not by faith!

**Verse 14.** *Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high* The word עֵץ ets, which we translate gallows, signifies simply wood, a tree, or pole; and this was to be seventy-five feet high, that he might suffer the greater ignominy, and be a more public spectacle. I believe impaling is here also meant. See the note, Esther 2:23.

IN former times the Jews were accustomed to burn Haman in effigy; and with him a wooden cross, which they pretended to be in memory of that which he had erected for the suspension of Mordecai; but which was, in fact, to deride the Christian religion. The emperors, Justinian and Theodosius, abolished it by their edicts; and the practice has ceased from that time, though the principle from which it sprang still exists, with the same virulence against Christianity and its glorious Author.

## CHAPTER 6

*That night the king, not being able to sleep, orders the chronicles of the kingdom to be read to him; and finds there the record concerning the discovery of the treason of the two eunuchs, made by Mordecai, 1, 2. He inquires whether Mordecai had been rewarded, and was answered in the negative, 3. At this time Haman arrives, in order to request the king's permission to hang Mordecai; and being suddenly asked what should be done to the man whom the king delighted to honor, supposing that himself must be meant, presented the ceremonial, 4-9. The king orders him to give Mordecai those honors; which he performs, to his extreme mortification, 10, 11. He informs his wife Zeresh of these transactions, who predicts his downfall, 12-13. He is hurried by the eunuchs to the queen's banquet, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1. *On that night could not the king sleep*** The Targum says the king had a dream, which was as follows:—"And the king sat one in the similitude of a man who spoke these words to him: Haman desireth to slay thee, and to make himself king in thy stead. Behold, he will come unto thee early in the morning, to ask from thee the man who rescued thee from death, that he may slay him: but say thou unto Haman, What shall be done for the man whose honor the king studieth? And thou wilt find that he will ask nothing less from thee than the royal vestments, the regal crown, and the horse on which the king is wont to ride."

***The records of the chronicles*** It may be well asked, Why should the king, in such a perturbed state of mind, wish such a dry detail, as chronicles afford, to be read to him? But the truth is, as chronicles were composed among the Persians, he could not have brought before him any work more instructive, and more entertaining; because they were all written in verse, and were generally the work of the most eminent poets in the empire. They are written in this way to the present time; and the famous epic poem of the finest Persian poet, Ferdusi, the Homer of India, is nothing

else than a collection of chronicles brought down from the creation to the reign of Mohammed Ghezny, in the beginning of the tenth century. After thirty years' labor, he finished this poem, which contained one hundred and twenty thousand lines, and presented it to the Sultan Mahmoud, who had promised to give him a dinar (eight shillings and sixpence) for every line. The poem was finished A.D. 984; and was formed out of compositions of a similar nature made by former poets. This chronological poem is written in all the harmony, strength, and elegance of the most beautiful and harmonious language in the universe; and what adds greatly to its worth is, that it has few Arabic words, with which the beautiful Persian tongue was loaded, and in my opinion corrupted, after the conquest of the major part of Asia by the Mohammedans. The pedants of Hindoostan, whether they speak or write, in prose or in verse, affect this commixture of Arabic words; which, though they subjugate them to Persian rules, are producing a ruggedness in a language, which in Ferdusi, flows deep and strong like a river of oil over every kind of channel. Such, I suppose, was the chronicle that was read to Ahasuerus, when his distractions prevented his sleep, and his troubled mind required that soothing repose which the gentle though powerful hand of poetry is alone, in such circumstances, capable of affording. Even our rough English ancestors had their poetic chronicles; and, among many, the chronicle of Robert of Gloucester is proof in point. I need not add, that all that is real in Ossian is of the same complexion.

**Verse 3. *What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai*** It is certain he found nothing in the record; and had any thing been done, that was the most likely place to find it.

**Verse 4. *Who is in the court?*** This accords with the dream mentioned by the Targum; and given above.

**Now *Haman was come*** This must have been very early in the morning. Haman's pride and revenge were both on the tenters to be gratified.

**Verse 6. *The king said unto him*** He did not give him time to make his request; and put a question to him which, at the first view, promised him all that his heart could wish.

**Verse 8. *Let the royal apparel be brought*** Pride and folly ever go hand in hand. What he asked would have been in any ordinary case against his own life: but he wished to reach the pinnacle of honor: never reflecting that the higher he rose, the more terrible would be his fall. The royal apparel was never worn but by the king: even when the king had lain them aside, it was death to put them on. The Targum has purple robes.

***And the horse-and the crown royal*** Interpreters are greatly divided whether what is called here the crown royal be not rather an ornament worn on the head of the horse, than what may be called the royal crown. The original may be understood both ways; and our version seems to favor the former opinion; but I think it more likely that the royal crown is meant; for why mention the ordinary trappings of the royal steed?

**Verse 9. *One of the king's most noble princes*** Alas, Poor Haman! Never was the fable of the dog and shadow more literally fulfilled. Thou didst gape at the shadow, and didst lose the substance.

**Verse 10. *Make haste, and take the apparel-and do even so to Mordecai*** O mortifying reverse of human fortune! How could Haman bear this? The Targumist might speak according to nature when he said that "Haman besought the king to kill him rather than degrade him so." How astonishing is the conduct of Divine providence in all this business! From it we plainly see that there is neither counsel nor wisdom against the Lord; and that he who digs a pit for his neighbor, is sure to fall into it himself.

**Verse 12. *Mordecai came again to the king's gate*** He resumed his former humble state; while Haman, ashamed to look up, covered his face, and ran home to hide himself in his own house. Covering the head and face was a sign of shame and confusion, as well as of grief, among most people of the earth.

**Verse 13. *But shalt surely fall before him.*** The Septuagint adds, **οτι ο θεος ο ζων μετ' αυτου**, for the living God is with him. But this is a sentiment that could scarcely be expected to proceed from the mouth of heathens, such as these were.

**Verse 14. *Hasted to bring Haman*** There was a dreadful banquet before him, of which he knew nothing: and he could have little appetite to enjoy that which he knew was prepared at the palace of Esther.

ONE grand design of this history is, to show that he who lays a snare for the life of his neighbor, is most likely to fall into it himself: for, in the course of the Divine providence, men generally meet with those evils in life which they have been the means of inflicting on others: and this is exactly agreeable to the saying of our Lord: “With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you withal.”

## CHAPTER 7

*The king at the banquet urges Esther to prefer her petition, with the positive assurance that it shall be granted, 1, 2. She petitions for her own life, and the life of her people, who were sold to be destroyed, 3, 4. The king inquires the author of this project, and Haman is accused by the queen, 5, 6. The king is enraged: Haman supplicates for his life; but the king orders him to be hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, 7-10.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 2. *At the banquet of wine*** Postquam vino incaluerat, after he had been heated with wine, says the Vulgate. In such a state the king was more likely to come into the measures of the queen.

**Verse 3. *Let my life be given me*** This was very artfully, as well as very honestly, managed; and was highly calculated to work on the feelings of the king. What! is the life of the queen, whom I most tenderly love, in any kind of danger?

**Verse 4. *To be destroyed, to be slain*** She here repeats the words which Haman put into the decree. See Esther 3:13.

***Could not countervail the king's damage.*** Even the ten thousand talents of silver could not be considered as a compensation to the state for the loss of a whole nation of people throughout all their generations.

**Verse 5. *Who is he, and where is he*** There is a wonderful abruptness and confusion in the original words, highly expressive of the state of mind in which the king then was: **זֶה וְאִי זֶה הוּא אֲשֶׁר מֵלֵאֵו לִבּוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן**  
**זֶה וְאִי זֶה הוּא** mi hu zeh veey zeh hu asher melao libbo laasoth ken.

“Who? He? This one? And where? This one? He? Who hath filled his heart to do thus?” He was at once struck with the horrible nature of a conspiracy so cruel and diabolic.

**Verse 7. *Haman stood up*** He rose from the table to make request for his life, as soon as the king had gone out; and then he fell on his knees before the queen, she still sitting upon her couch.

**Verse 8. *Will he force the queen*** On the king's return he found him at the queen's knees; and, professing to think that he intended to do violence to her honor, used the above expressions; though he must have known that, in such circumstances, the thought of perpetrating an act of this kind could not possibly exist.

***They covered Haman's face.*** This was a sign of his being devoted to death: for the attendants saw that the king was determined on his destruction. When a criminal was condemned by a Roman judge, he was delivered into the hands of the serjeant with these words: I, licitor; caput obnubito, arbori infelici suspendito. "Go, serjeant; cover his head, and hang him on the accursed tree."

**Verse 9. *Behold also, the gallows*** As if he had said, Besides all he has determined to do to the Jews, he has erected a very high gallows, on which he had determined, this very day, to hang Mordecai, who has saved the king's life.

***Hang him thereon.*** Let him be instantly impaled on the same post. "Harm watch, harm catch," says the proverb. Perillus was the first person burnt alive in the brazen bull which he had made for the punishment of others; hence the poet said:—

— *Nec lex est justior ulla,  
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.*

"Nor can there be a juster law than that the artificers of death should perish by their own invention."

## CHAPTER 8

*Ahasuerus invests Mordecai with the offices and dignities possessed by Haman, 1, 2. Esther begs that the decree of destruction gone out against the Jews may be reversed, 3-6. He informs her that the acts that had once passed the kings seal cannot be reversed; but he instructs her and Mordecai to write other letters in his name, and seal them with his seal, and send them to all the provinces in the empire, giving the Jews full liberty to defend themselves; which is accordingly done; and the letters are sent off with the utmost speed to all the provinces: in consequence, the Jews prepare for their own defense, 8-14. Mordecai appears publicly in the dress of his high office, 15. The Jews rejoice in every place; and many of the people become Jews, because the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them, 16, 17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. *The king-give the house of Haman*** As Haman was found guilty of treasonable practices against the peace and prosperity of the king and his empire, his life was forfeited and his goods confiscated. And as Mordecai had been the means of preserving the king's life, and was the principal object of Haman's malice, it was but just to confer his property upon him, as well as his dignity and office, as Mordecai was found deserving of the former, and fit to discharge the duties of the latter.

**Verse 2. *The king took off his ring*** In the ring was the seal of the king. Giving the ring to Mordecai was tantamount to giving him the seal of the kingdom, and constituting him the same as lord chancellor among us.

**Verse 6. *To see the destruction of my kindred?*** She had now informed the king that she was cousin to Mordecai, and consequently a Jewess; and though her own life and that of Mordecai were no longer in danger, Haman being dead, yet the decree that had gone forth was in full force against the Jews; and if not repealed, their destruction would be inevitable.



**Verse 8. *May no man reverse.*** Whatever had passed the royal signet could never be revoked; no succeeding edict could destroy or repeal a preceding one: but one of a similar nature to the Jews against the Persians, as that to the Persians was against the Jews, might be enacted, and thus the Jews be enabled legitimately to defend themselves; and, consequently, placed on an equal footing with their enemies.

**Verse 9. *The month Sivan*** This answers to a part of our May and June.

**Verse 10. *On mules, camels, and young dromedaries*** What these beasts were is difficult to say. The word רכש *rechesh*, which we translate mules, signifies a swift chariot horse.

The strange word אַחַשְׁתְּרָנִים *achashteranim* is probably a Persian word, but perhaps incurably corrupted. The most likely derivation is that of Bochart, from the Persian [P] akhash, huge, large, rough, and [P] aster, a mule; large mules.

The words בְּנֵי הַרְמָמִים *beney harammachim*, the sons of mares, which we translate dromedaries, are supposed to signify mules, produced between the he ass and the mare, to distinguish them from those produced between the stallion and the ass, But there is really so much confusion about these matters, and so little consent among learned men as to the signification of these words, and even the true knowledge of them is of such little importance, that we may well rest contented with such names as our modern translations have given us. They were, no doubt, the swiftest and hardiest beasts that the city or country could produce.

**Verse 11. *To destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish*** The same words as in Haman's decree: therefore the Jews had as much authority to slay their enemies, as their enemies had to slay them.

***Little ones and women*** This was the ordinary custom, to destroy the whole family of those convicted of great crimes; and whether this was right or wrong, it was the custom of the people, and according to the laws. Besides, as this edict was to give the Jews the same power against their enemies as they had by the former decree against them, and the women and children were there included; consequently they must be included here.

**Verse 14. *The decree was given at Shushan*** The contrary effect which it was to produce considered, this decree was in every respect like the former. See Esther 3:8-15.

**Verse 15. *Blue and white*** Probably stripe interchanged with stripe; or blue faced and bordered with white fur.

***A great crown of gold*** A large turban, ornamented with gold, jewels, etc.

***Fine linen and purple*** See on Genesis 41:42. The **יָבֵט** buts, here mentioned, is most probably the same with the byssus of the ancients; supposed to be the beautiful tuft or beard, growing out of the side of the pinna longa, a very large species of muscle, found on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, of which there are a pair of gloves in the British Museum. This byssus I have described elsewhere.

***Shushan-was glad.*** Haman was too proud to be popular; few lamented his fall.

**Verse 17. *Many-became Jews; for-fear*** These were a species of converts not likely to bring much honor to true religion: but the sacred historian states the simple fact. They did profess Judaism for fear of the Jews, whether they continued steady in that faith or not.

It is only the Gospel which will not admit of coercion for the propagation and establishment of its doctrines. It is a spiritual system, and can be propagated only by spiritual influence. As it proclaims holiness of heart and life, which nothing but the Spirit of God can produce, so it is the Spirit of God alone that can persuade the understanding and change the heart. If the kingdom of Christ were of this world, then would his servants fight. But it is not from hence.

## CHAPTER 9

*On the thirteenth of the month Adar the Jews destroy their enemies, and the governors of the provinces assist them, 1-5. They slay five hundred in Shushan, and kill the ten sons of Haman, but take no spoil, 6-10. The king is informed of the slaughter in Shushan, 11. He desires to know what Esther requests farther; who begs that the Jews may be permitted to act on the following day as they had done on the preceding, and that Haman's sons may be hanged upon the gallows; which is granted; and they slay three hundred more in Shushan, and in the other provinces seventy-five thousand, 12-16. A recapitulation of what was done; and of the appointment of the feast of Purim to be observed through all their generations every year, 17-28. Esther writes to confirm this appointment, 29-32.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. *Now in the twelfth month*** What a number of providences, and none of them apparently of an extraordinary nature, concurred to preserve a people so signally, and to all human appearance so inevitably, doomed to destruction! None are ever too low for God to lift up, or too high for God to cast down. Must not these heathens have observed that the uncontrollable hand of an Almighty Being had worked in behalf of the Jews? And must not this have had a powerful tendency to discredit the idolatry of the country?

**Verse 3. *And all the rulers of the provinces*** Mordecai being raised to the highest confidence of the king, and to have authority over the whole realm, these officers assisted the Jews, no doubt, with the troops under their command, to overthrow those who availed themselves of the former decree to molest the Jews. For it does not appear that the Jews slew any person who did not rise up to destroy them. See Esther 9:5.

**Verse 6. *And in Shushan*** It is strange that in this city, where the king's mind must have been so well known, there should be found five hundred

persons to rise up in hostility against those whom they knew the king befriended!

**Verse 10. *The ten sons of Haman*** Their names are given above. And it is remarked here, and in Esther 9:16, where the account is given of the number slain in the provinces, that the Jews laid no hands on the spoil. They stood for their lives, and gave full proof that they sought their own personal safety, and not the property of their enemies, though the decree in their favor gave them authority to take the property of all those who were their adversaries, Esther 8:11.

**Verse 13. *Let Haman's ten sons be hanged*** They had been slain the preceding day, and now she requests that they may be exposed on posts or gibbets, as a terror to those who sought the destruction of the Jews.

**Verse 15. *And slew three hundred men*** Esther had probably been informed by Mordecai that there were still many enemies of the Jews who sought their destruction, who had escaped the preceding day; and, therefore, begs that this second day be added to the former permission. This being accordingly granted, they found three hundred more, in all eight hundred. And thus Susa was purged of all their enemies.

**Verse 18. *The Jews-assembled-on the thirteenth-and on the fourteenth*** These two days they were employed in slaying their enemies; and they rested on the fifteenth.

**Verse 19. *The Jews of the villages*** They joined that to the preceding day, and made it a day of festivity, and of sending portions to each other; that is, the rich sent portions of the sacrifices slain on this occasion to the poor, that they also might be enabled to make the day a day of festivity; that as the sorrow was general, so also might the joy be.

It is worthy of remark that the ancient Itala or Ante-hieronymian version of this book omits the whole of these nineteen verses. Query, Were they originally in this book?

**Verse 20. *Mordecai wrote these things*** It has been supposed that thus far that part of the book of Esther, which was written by Mordecai extends: what follows to the end, was probably added either by Ezra, or the men of the Great Synagogue; though what is said here may refer only to the letters

sent by Mordecai to the Jews of the provinces. From this to the end of the chapter is nothing else than a recapitulation of the chief heads of the preceding history, and an account of the appointment of an annual feast, called the feast of Purim, in commemoration of their providential deliverance from the malice of Haman.

**Verse 23. *The Jews undertook to do as they had begun*** They had already kept the fifteenth day, and some of them in the country the fourteenth also, as a day of rejoicing: Mordecai wrote to them to bind themselves and their successors, and all their proselytes, to celebrate this as an annual feast throughout all their generations; and this they undertook to do. And it has been observed among them, in all places of their dispersion, from that day to the present time, without any interruption.

**Verse 26. *They called these days Purim— That is from*** [P] pari, the lot; because, as we have seen, Haman cast lots to find what month, and what day of the month, would be the most favorable for the accomplishment of his bloody designs against the Jews. See on Esther 3:7.

***And of that which they had seen*** The first letter to which this second refers, must be that sent by Mordecai himself. See Esther 9:20.

**Verse 29. *Esther-wrote with all authority*** Esther and Mordecai had the king's license so to do: and their own authority was great and extensive.

**Verse 31. *As they had decreed for themselves and for their seed*** There is no mention of their receiving the approbation of any high priest, nor of any authority beyond that of Mordecai and Esther; the king could not join in such a business, as he had nothing to do with the Jewish religion, that not being the religion of the country.

**Verse 32. *The decree of Esther confirmed these matters*** It was received by the Jews universally with all respect, and they bound themselves to abide by it.

The Vulgate gives a strange turn to this verse: Et omnia quae libri hujus, qui vocatur Esther, historia continentur; "And all things which are contained in the history of this book, which is called Esther."

The Targum says, And by the word of Esther all these things relative to Purim were confirmed; and the roll was transcribed in this book. The

Syriac is the same as the Hebrew, and the Septuagint in this place not very different.

## CHAPTER 10

*Ahasuerus lays a tribute on his dominions, 1. Mordecai's advancement under him, 2. His character, 3.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1. *Laid a tribute upon the land*** On the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of which we have already heard.

***The isles of the sea.*** Probably the isles of the AEgean sea, which were conquered by Darius Hystaspes. Calmet supposes that this Hystaspes is the Ahasuerus of Esther.

**Verse 2. *The book of the chronicles of Media and Persia?*** The Persians have ever been remarkable for keeping exact chronicles of all public events. Their Tareekhs, which are compositions of this kind, are still very numerous, and indeed very important.

**Verse 3. *Was next unto king Ahasuerus*** He was his prime minister; and, under him, was the governor of the whole empire.

The Targum is extravagant in its encomiums upon Mordecai: "All the kings of the earth feared and trembled before him: he was as resplendent as the evening star among the stars; and was as bright as Aurora beaming forth in the morning; and he was chief of the kings."

***Seeking the wealth of his people*** Studying to promote the Jewish interest to the utmost of his power.

***Speaking peace to all his seed.*** Endeavoring to settle their prosperity upon such a basis, that it might be for ever permanent. Here the Hebrew text ends; but in the ancient Vulgate, and in the Greek, ten verses are added to this chapter, and six whole chapters besides, so that the number of chapters in Esther amounts to sixteen. A translation of these may be found in the Apocrypha, bound up with the sacred text, in most of our larger

English Bibles. On any part of this work it is not my province to add any comment.

THIS is the last of the historical books of the Old Testament, for from this time to the birth of Christ they had no inspired writers; and the interval of their history must be sought among the apocryphal writers and other historians who have written on Jewish affairs. The most complete supplement to this history will be found in that most excellent work of Dean Prideaux, entitled *The Old and New Testaments connected*, in the *History of the Jews and Neighbouring Nations, from the Declension of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah to the time of CHRIST*, 4 vols. 8vo. 1725. The editions prior to this date are not so complete.

We have already seen what the Feast of PURIM means, and why it was instituted; if the reader is desirous of farther information on this subject, he may find it in the works of Buxtorf, Leusden, Stehlin, and Calmet's Dictionary, article Pur.

### **MASORETIC NOTES ON THE BOOK OF ESTHER**

Number of verses, 167. Middle verse, Esther 5:7. Sections, 5.

The following excellent remarks on the history of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, I borrow from Dr. John Taylor's Scheme of Scripture Divinity, and make no doubt I shall have the thanks of every reader whose thanks are worth having.

“After the Babylonish captivity, the Jews no more lapsed into idolatry, but remained steady in the acknowledgment and worship of the one living and true God. Even then they fell into new ways of perverting religion, and the wise and holy intentions of the Divine law: 1. By laying all the stress on the external and less momentous parts of it, while they neglected the weighty and substantial, true holiness of heart and life. Mankind are too easily drawn into this error; while they retain a sense of religion, they are too apt to listen to any methods by which it may be reduced to a consistency with the gratification of their passions, pride, and avarice. Thus, by placing religion in mere profession, or in the zealous observance of rites and ceremonies, instead of real piety, truth, purity, and goodness,



they learn to be religious without virtue. 2. By speculating and commenting upon the Divine commands and institutions till their force is quite enervated, and they are refined into a sense that will commodiously allow a slight regard instead of sincere obedience. 3. By confirming and establishing the two former methods of corrupting religion by tradition, and the authority of learned rabbins, pretending that there was a system of religious rules delivered by word of mouth from Moses explanatory of the written law, known only to those rabbins, to whose judgment and decision, therefore, all the people were to submit.

“This in time (the space of two hundred and nineteen years) became the general state of religion among the Jews, after they had discarded idolatry: and this spirit prevailed among them for some ages (two hundred and ninety years) before the coming of Messiah; but, however, it did not interfere with the main system of Providence, or the introducing the knowledge of God among the nations, as they still continued steadfast in the worship of the true God, without danger of deviating from it.

“Thus the Jews were prepared by the preceding dispensation for the reception of the Messiah, and the just notions of religion which he was sent to inculcate; insomuch that their guilt must be highly aggravated if they rejected him and his instructions. It could not be for want of capacity, but of integrity, and must be assigned to wilful blindness and obduracy. Out of regard to temporal power, grandeur, and enjoyments, they loved darkness rather than light.

“For many ages the Jews had been well known in the Eastern empire, among the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians; but till the time of Alexander the Great they had no communication with the Grecians.

“About the year before Christ 332 Alexander built Alexandria in Egypt; and to people his new city, removed thither many of the Jews, allowing them the use of their own laws and religion, and the same liberties with the Macedonians themselves. The Macedonians, who spake the Greek language, and other Greeks, were the principal inhabitants of Alexandria; from them the Jews learnt to speak Greek, which was the common language of the city, and which soon became the native language of the Jews that lived there, who on that account were called Hellenists, or Greek Jews, mentioned Acts 6:1, 9; 11:20. These Greek Jews had synagogues in

Alexandria, and for their benefit the Five Books of Moses, which alone at first were publicly read, were translated into Greek, (by whom is uncertain,) and were read in their synagogues every Sabbath day; and in the

favorable to literature, that Ptolemy Soter was thereby enabled to erect a museum or library, which, by his son and successor, Philadelphus, who died two hundred and forty-seven years before Christ, was augmented to seven hundred thousand volumes. Part of this library happened to be burnt when Julius Caesar laid siege to Alexandria; but after that loss it was again much augmented, and soon grew up to be larger, and of more eminent note, than the former; till at length it was burnt and finally destroyed by the Saracens, in the year of our Lord 642. This plainly proves how much the invention of turning the papyrus into paper contributed to the increase of books, and the advancement of learning, for some ages before the coming of our Lord. Add to all this, that the world, after many changes and revolutions, was, by God's all-ruling wisdom, thrown into that form of civil affairs which best suited with the great intended alteration. The many petty states and tyrannies, whose passions and bigotry might have run counter to the schemes of Providence, were all swallowed up in one great power, the ROMAN, to which all appeals lay; the seat of which, Rome, lay at a great distance from Jerusalem, the spring from which the Gospel was to rise and flow to all nations; and therefore as no material obstruction to the Gospel could come but from one quarter, none could suddenly arise from thence, but only in process of time, when the Gospel was sufficiently opened and established, as it did not in the least interfere with the Roman polity and government.

“The Gospel was first published in a time of general peace and tranquillity throughout the whole world, which gave the preachers of it an opportunity of passing freely from one country to another, and the minds of men the advantage of attending calmly to it.

“Many savage nations were civilized by the Romans, and became acquainted with the arts and virtues of their conquerors. Thus the darkest countries had their thoughts awakened, and were growing to a capacity of receiving, at the stated time, the knowledge of true religion; so that all things and circumstances conspired now with the views of heaven, and made this apparently the fullness of time, (Galatians 4:4,) or the fittest juncture for God to reveal himself to the Gentiles, and to put an end to idolatry throughout the earth. Now the minds of men were generally ripe for a purer and brighter dispensation; and the circumstances of the world were such as favored the progress of it.” -P. 368.

Hated and despised as the Jews were among the proud Romans, and the still more proud and supercilious Greeks, their sojourning among them, and their Greek version of the Scriptures, commonly called the Septuagint, were the means of furnishing them with truer notions, and a more distinct knowledge of vice and virtue, than they ever had before. And on examination we shall find that, from the time of Alexander's conquest of Judea, a little more than three hundred years before our Lord, both Greeks and Romans became more correct in their theological opinions; and the sect of eclectic philosophers, whose aim was to select from all preceding sects what was most consistent with reason and truth, were not a little indebted to the progress which the light of God, dispensed by means of the Septuagint, had made in the heathen world. And let it be remembered, that for Jews, who were settled in Grecian countries, this version was made, and by those Jews it was carried through all the places of their dispersion.

To this version Christianity, under God, owes much. To this version we are indebted for such a knowledge of the Hebrew originals of the Old Testament, as we could never have had without it, the pure Hebrew having ceased to be vernacular after the Babylonish captivity; and Jesus Christ and his apostles have stamped an infinite value upon it by the general use they have made of it in the New Testament; perhaps never once quoting, directly, the Hebrew text, or using any other version than some copy of the Septuagint. By this version, though prophecy had ceased from the times of Ezra, Daniel, and Malachi, yet the law and the prophets were continued down to the time of Christ; and this was the grand medium by which this conveyance was made. And why is this version neglected? I hesitate not to assert that no man can ever gain a thorough knowledge of the phraseology of the New Testament writers, who is unacquainted with this version, or has not profited by such writers as derived their knowledge from it. A. CLARKE. Millbrook, February 3, 1820.

Finished the correction of this volume, Oct. 16, 1828. — A. CLARKE.

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